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An Examination of Perpetrator Explanations for Sexual abuse of Young Children in South Africa

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is alleged to have the highest rate of sexual abuse per capita among 49 other countries. These statistics and media reports have sparked debates about what could account for the sexual abuse of children under the age of six including babies. Speculations about what would account for this allegedly high incidence have used patriarchy, poverty, HIV/AIDS and the 'virgin myth'. To date not enough research has been completed to clarify or test the various theories that abound in the country. This thesis explores one element of the problem - how perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with young children in South Africa. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 27 incarcerated sex offenders, aged between 16 and 86, all convicted for sexual abuse of children aged six years and below.

The perpetrators in this study do not use the virgin cleansing myth as an explanation for the sexual abuse of young children. Instead the interviews tell a story of how childhood adversities, socio-cultural factors including patriarchal notions of manhood, particularly the perpetrators' beliefs about sexual entitlement, are used to explain the sexual abuse of young children. Interviewee narratives also suggest that the democratisation of South Africa has led to feelings of disempowerment in these men and restricted their access to sex and this is used to justify sexual abuse of young children. Although there were assertions that sexual gratification motivated the abuse, the findings suggest that perpetrators were mostly motivated by the need for the acquisition of power to target young children for sex.

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ACRONYMS

ABET - Adult Basic Education and Training

AIDS - Acquired immune deficiency syndrome/ Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

ANC - African National Congress

BSA - British Sociological Association

CAQDAS - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software

CBO - Community-based organization

CIET - Community Information and Epidemiological Technologies

CSA - Child sexual abuse

CRC - Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations)

CSVR – Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

CPO - child protection police officer

DCS - Department of Correctional Services

DSD - Department of Social development

DoJ - Department of Justice and Constitutional Development

**FCS - South African Police Service’s Family Violence, Child protection and Sexual
Offences Unit**

FGD - Focus group discussion

GT - Grounded Theory

HIV - Human immuno virus /Human immunodeficiency virus

HRW – Human Rights Watch

HSC - Health and Social Care

HSRC - Human Sciences Research Council

IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Networks

MEC - Member of Executive Council

MRC - Medical Research Council

NGO - Nongovernmental organization

NP - National Party

OU - The Open University

PEP - Post-exposure prophylaxis

RXH - Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital

SA - South Africa

SADHS - South Africa Demographic and Health Survey

SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation

SALC – South African Law Commission

SAPS - South African Police Service

SC - Social Constructionism

Std - Standard (of education)

STD - Sexually transmitted disease

SVRI - Sexual Violence Research Initiative

TVEP - Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment Programme

UL - University of Limpopo

UN - United Nations

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNISA - University of South Africa

US – United States

VEP - Victim Empowerment Programme

WHO - World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

“By day, she dances through the two-room house like any other child, hides her face in her hands and peers gleefully through her fingers. But at night, only the bedroom light can keep the bad man from creeping into her dreams. Sinazo is 8 years old and doctors say she is so damaged inside that she will never have children. Her mother prompts her gently, and the words come rushing out. “He stripped my dress and my underwear,” Sinazo says. “That man, he stripped himself. Then he raped me.” Sinazo’s story is just one in a surge in reports of rapes of children and infants that has shaken South Africa. In recent months, several widely publicized cases have galvanized thousands of people, who have marched through the streets in different parts of the country to demand government action.....here in this impoverished township, the small victims still totter home like broken birds, whispering about the grown men who rape with numbing regularity. A doctor at the shabby public hospital opens a battered binder and counts the names: in 2001, more than 200 child rapes, mostly girls ages 7 to 9” (Swarns, 2002, p. 6).

South Africa is now 19 years into democracy after the disbanding of apartheid. Although most of its citizens hoped for life improvements, the transition has taken longer than expected. For the majority of the poor people little has changed. Apartheid has left scars on the nation which includes poverty, crime and domestic violence. While all nations may display these problems, the patterns of social dislocation established in the apartheid era have not gone away. Migration from Southern Africa and within South Africa has led to the fragmentation of households. This disrupted familial and communal attachments long before

HIV/Aids intensified such processes. These pressures are present now, they were present under apartheid, and possibly they were present when in 1895, Cecil John Rhodes took an interest in the goldfields around what became Johannesburg.

Arguably these longstanding pressures have undermined the stability and consistency of individual values and behaviour as well as the effectiveness of community surveillance of abusive behaviours, creating a climate in which all people become vulnerable to extremes of behaviour. Adults become vulnerable to crimes including violence and children too are made vulnerable to a variety of abuses. One such abuse emerges in the form of sexual abuse of young children some of which have been reported in the media.

At the beginning of this century child sexual abuse in South Africa became a cause célèbre at once sombre and scandalous, almost a way of signifying that everything in post-Apartheid South Africa was 'not quite right'. In South Africa, the phenomenon of child sexual abuse had not previously seen such media or academic attention, certainly not in the way that child sexual abuse had come to prominence in the USA, Europe, and many other countries since the 1970's (Lalor, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Olafson, Corwin and Summit, 1993; Finkelhor, 1986). One effect of the apartheid era was to suppress public discourse about all sexual subject matter, either directly or because issues around the fight for, or against apartheid took precedence. Moreover, in legal and practical terms the apartheid state only recognised the possibility of child abuse affecting only white children. So South Africa came late to the broader discourse of child sexual abuse; despite the fact that apartheid and its political antecedents were implicated in many and varied forms of abuse.

When South Africa became aware of the problem of child sexual abuse it did so with a sense of shock. Why, after the social liberation from apartheid did such evils continue to exist, and at least according to the media, why did it exist to such a great extent? Was this a matter of South Africa waking up to something sinister that existed everywhere else in the world or was its seeming extent something peculiar to South Africa? What lay beneath the upturned stone?

In a sense this thesis is a result of this type of question and concern¹. This thesis seeks to uncover, from the point of view of perpetrators, why child sexual abuse occurs. Victims inherently react to others' inexplicably abusive acts, often internalising and 'blaming' themselves (Hazzard, Celano, Gould, Lawry and Webb, 1995). Innocent bystanders, in communities either close to the abusive act and communities distant from the act can only anxiously interpret the reportage of abuse through the lenses of others. Convicted perpetrators by contrast have a first-hand experience, they may have known what they intended before the abusive event occurred. Although they may attempt to justify abusive acts what they say can shed direct light on their apparent motivation as well as the behaviours of other perpetrators. In other words, they are insiders to something always denied to 'innocent bystanders' and to most victims. So in talking through sexual abuse of young children with perpetrators we can, hopefully, shed direct light on what lies beneath the upturned stone, which is the overarching purpose of this thesis.

We cannot explore perpetrator narratives and how these were investigated, without dealing with the general situation and context regarding child sexual abuse in South Africa. This is the purpose of the present chapter. The chapter presents an examination of the issues around apparent incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse and academic estimates of the size

¹ The high rates of child sexual abuse and other types of abuse suffered by children in South Africa motivated the Infant Trust to initiate work in South Africa. The Infant Trust identified the paucity of research on issues related to young children and as part of its strategic objectives it made funding available for research on issues related to young children and this study became the first research project for the Trust.

and shape of this social problem. The chapter also provides an outline of the significance of this study in the context of other studies of child sexual abuse before we tackle issues of definition and use of the language around abusive behaviour. Finally an outline of the role and function of each chapter of the thesis is given.

1.2 CONTEXTUALISING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Until 2000, both official reportage and academic research of child sexual abuse in South Africa was not substantial. From 2000, the media began to report incidents of child sexual abuse. The problem appeared to be serious, in terms of incidence and the significantly harmful consequences of the reported acts of abuse (Richter, Dawes and Higson-Smith, 2004, p. 30). Some of the headlines read as follows:

‘Man jailed for raping stepdaughter’ (Natal Witness, 18 September 2002).

‘Baby critical after rape in Hillbrow flat’ (Natal Witness, (South Africa), 4 November 2002).

‘Five-month-old dies after being raped’ (Natal Witness, (South Africa), 22 November 2002).

The brutalities portrayed by these reports elicited the following reactions:

“Violence against women and children - whether sexual, physical or mental abuse - is endemic in our country. We all thought we couldn't get any lower than the horror of Baby Tshepang, a nine-month-old baby who was raped and sodomised at Louisvaleweg, near Upington, in November 2001” (The Star, South Africa, 2007).

Media statements such as “One in Four Men Say They are Rapists,” made in the Sunday Times (Pretorius, 2000), a South African publication, seemed to illustrate that sexual

violence is widespread. However, the actual rates of child sexual abuse were unknown when the media made these reports, suggesting a high incidence and prevalence of crime and particularly sexual abuse of young children in South Africa more than anywhere else in the world (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Posel, 2005a). As shall be shown later in this section and throughout this study, the rates are still unknown due to the paucity of empirical evidence which makes the estimation of rates of sexual violence impossible (Dawes, Borel-Saladin and Parker, 2004).

Some of the inherent challenges for availability of usable incidence and prevalence data include differences in definitions by professionals and communities of what constitute child sexual abuse; methodological approaches in collecting such data; and different approaches employed by different professionals and different government departments (Richter and Dawes, 2008). Two issues are pertinent for this thesis. The first is the unreliability of South African Police Service (SAPS) reports. These reports highlight challenges in record management including those brought about by changes in the definition of sexual offences in the Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act no. 32 of 2007 as shall be discussed later in this chapter. The second is the low conviction rates and lack of categorisation of sex offenders in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) prisoner records, a point discussed later in this section.

Police reports

Statistics from the SAPS (SAPS, 2012, p. 36-38) presented in table 1.1 and 1.2 below, represent the only consistent, though not reliable, national source of crime data. These figures indicate the high levels of violence in general in the country as well as the high rates of sexual violence against women and children. SAPS reports that 1 in 8 cases of sexual violence are reported (SAPS, 2007). This illustrates that many cases are unreported and that

no one knows whether the situation is improving or getting worse. However, the latest report (SAPS, 2011/12) illustrate that, although the department emphasized a decrease in sexual assault cases against children, more children (25 862) were abused in 2011/12 than in 2006/7 (25 248). What is more problematic from the figures is they suggest that children are subjected to sexual abuse more than any other crime in South Africa.

Table 1.1: Gender and Age Distribution: Selected Contact Reported Crime Figures

Proportion of Selected contact crime: 2011/2012							
CRIME	Children		Adult women		Adult males		TOTAL
Murder	793	5,1%	2 286	14,6%	12 530	80,3%	15 609 100,0%
Attempted murder	758	5,1%	2 416	16,3%	11 685	78,6%	14 859 100,0%
Assault GBH	10 630	5,5%	57 345	29,8%	124 676	64,7%	192 651 100,0%
Common assault	12 645	7,0%	87 191	48,0%	81 834	45,0%	181 670 100,0%
Sexual offences	25 862	40,1%	31 299	48,5%	7 353	11,4%	64 514 100,0%
TOTAL	50 688	10,8%	180 537	38,5%	238 078	50,7%	469 303 100,0%

Source: Crime Statistics Overview RSA 2011/2012 (SAPS, 2012, p. 38)

Table 1.2: Child victims: Selected contact Recorded Crime figures (SAPS, 2012, p. 36)

Crime Category	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	Difference 2011/2012 vs. 2010/2011	% Increase/ Decrease
Murder	972	1 015	843	965	906	793	-113	-12,5%
Attempted murder	889	852	782	1 113	786	758	-28	-3,6%
All sexual offences	25 248	22 124	20 141	27 417	28 128	25 862	-2 266	-8,1%
Common Assault	16 871	16 091	14 544	14 982	13 387	12 645	-742	-5,5%
Assault GBH	13 947	13 625	12 422	12 062	11 018	10 630	-388	-3,5%
TOTAL	58 107	53 707	48 732	56 539	54 225	50 688	-3537	-6,5%

Source: Crime Statistics Overview RSA 2011/2012 (SAPS, 2012, p. 38)

A further challenge in using the SAPS statistics is that their categories do not match child abuse age categories used by professionals and researchers.

This thesis focuses on sexual abuse victims who were six years old and younger. It is difficult to estimate the incidence and prevalence of sexual abuse of children below the age of six because, in contrast to child abuse reports in other parts of the world (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012), SAPS only has two age categories for children, that is, 0 to 11 years and 11 to 18 years. However, the SAPS report emphasises that 39.5% of sexual offences committed against children, during 2008/2009, occurred within the 15 – 17 age group. What is more problematic is that out of the estimated 20 141 cases of sexual offences against children recorded during 2008/2009, 60.5% were committed against children below the age of 15. Furthermore, the report illustrates the likelihood of a higher rate of sexual abuse of young children suggesting that 29.4% of these sexual offences were committed against children aged 0 – 10 years (SAPS, 2010/2011, p. 11).

SAPS reports suggest that it has become extremely difficult to make comparisons of rates of sexual offences between current rates and those prior to December 2007. The figures after 2007 are lower and look more unreliable. The difficulties were due to the changes in the definition of sexual offences when the new Sexual Offences and Related Matters Amendment Act no. 32 of 2007 came into effect in December 2007. A sexual offence now means:

“any offence in terms of Chapter 2, 3, 4 and section 55 and 71 (1), (2) and (6) of this act” (p. 9).

The changes have seen the inclusion of all matters relating to sexual offences such as, rape, compelled rape, pornography and trafficking, irrespective of gender, expanded and extended in one statute. Prior to 2007 December, rape previously referred to “exclusively

vaginal penetration by a male sexual organ”. Similarly, the definition of rape in the new act has also become broader stating that:

Any person (‘A’) who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (‘B’), without the consent of B, is guilty of the offence of rape (p. 11)

The definition now includes:

“vaginal, oral and anal penetration of a sexual nature by whatever means (and thus also male rape) which previously fell under the category of indecent assault. The concept of sexual offences then also goes further to add a whole range of transgressions which never previously formed part of rape or indecent assault – such as sex work, pornography, public indecency and human trafficking” (SAPS, 2010/2011, p. 10).

Therefore such a broad definition should have led to a significant increase in the national statistics but it has not as only 1.8% increase was recorded between the 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 financial years and 2.1% between 2009/2010 to 2010/2011. This illustrates that police statistics are unreliable and that often data entries are incorrect.

Department of Correctional Services records

The study aimed to study perpetrators and therefore the perpetrator population was important. However, due to very low conviction rates as per DCS records in table 2.3 below, as well as lack of categorisation of sex offender per victim age and gender, it was not helpful to use this data to understand prevalence and incidence estimates for child sexual abuse. Although professionals and researchers suggest most cases of child sexual abuse are not reported, most of those that are reported do not reach the courts and when they do very few result in convictions (Van As, Withers, du Toit, Millar, and Rode, 2001;

Andersson, Mhatre, Naidoo, Mayet, Mqotsi, Penderis, Onishi, Myburg and Merhi, 2000). Andersson et al., (2000) conducted a “social audit” in the Southern Metropolitan Local Council in Gauteng Province with 37 236 women, men and youth as well as 197 police officers, magistrates, prosecutors and service workers (including district surgeons, nurses, women’s organisations, social workers and government officials) from 1998 to 2000. Based on their findings, the researchers estimated that for every 394 women raped during 1997, 272 reports were made to the police and that 17 were tried in court leading to only one conviction (Andersson et al, 2000, p. xi). The results suggested that there are 1 in 400 chances of being convicted for sexual offences. As a result, relying on DCS sexual offences records was not useful in understanding the extent of child sexual abuse problem in South Africa. Table 1.3 below illustrate how low the figures are for sexual offences compared to SAPS crime statistics in tables 1.1 and 1.2 above.

Table 1.3: Crime categories per sentence from 2009/2010 to 2011/12

Crime	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Aggressive	63 746	62 267	61 174
Economical	25 694	25 575	25 417
Sexual	18 405	18 128	18 040
Narcotics	2 561	2 641	2 691
Other	5 285	5 081	5 214

Source: DCS Annual report (2011/2012, p. 23).

Researchers

Different sectors in society provide different sexual violence estimates. Although the police estimates (SAPS, 2007) suggest that 1 in 8 cases are reported, others (Dawes, Borel-Saladin and Parker, 2004) suggest that 1 in 15 cases are reported. However, the most often used estimate within the sexual violence field is that 1 in 35 rapes are reported (Jewkes and Abrahams, 2002; Human Right Watch, 1995). This further illustrates that inadequately supported estimates are widespread and without explanations of what the estimates are based on (Dawes and Borel-Saladin, 2004). The lack of adherence to mandatory reporting by professionals; lack of coordination between key departments dealing with child sexual abuse such as SAPS, Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) and Department of Justice (DoJ); inability of children to report due either lack of language or being pressured by family not to disclose (Van Niekerk, 2004) and mainly because child sexual abuse “is illicit and therefore often hidden” (Richter and Dawes, 2008, p. 82) makes estimation more complex.

It is therefore not surprising that there is underreporting of sexual abuse of young children. As a result, researchers (Van As, Withers, Du Toit, Millar and Rode, 2001; Jaffe and Roux, 1988) have conducted retrospective studies to establish what the incidence and prevalence rates are. Incidence reports for children six years old and younger are difficult to find in South Africa. Hospital records were identified as potentially a useful source of data for retrospective studies. However, this kind of data was available in cases where children suffered significant harm and had to be brought into some of the hospitals, involved in the studies, for treatment. For example:

During 1985, Jaffe and Roux (1988) investigated eighty-eight cases of suspected child sexual abuse cases at Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital (RXH) in Cape

Town. Seventy nine of these children were female, 9 were males and 52% of these victims were under the age of 6 years with most being in the 4 - 6-year-old age group. Most perpetrators were known to the victims and seven of them were known to the police or social services for sexual abuse. Between four to eleven children were seen per month and with more cases reported during school holidays.

Years later van As et al. (2001) conducted a study in the same hospital. Their study covered nine years between 1991 and 1999 with the aim of documenting the incidence of child rape, presentation, pattern of physical injuries, and management and outcome in their patient population in RXH in Cape Town. The authors reported that four hundred and fifty to five hundred sexually abused children are seen at the RXH annually. This suggested an enormous increase from what Jaffe and Roux (1988) reported earlier. Records of 200 children consisting of 174 girls and 26 boys were retrieved. Although the children's ages ranged from 8 months to 13 years, the study claimed that the risk to the children peaked between ages 3 and 4 and after 10 (van As et al., 2001). In 70% of the cases the perpetrator was known to the victim whereas 30% were strangers. 99% of the perpetrators were male and 1% was female. In 22% of the cases the ages of perpetrators were known and they ranged from 14 to 40 years. "Two children, who were HIV-negative immediately after the assault, subsequently sero-converted to become HIV-positive" (van As et al., 2001, p. 1037). The study did not address motives for sexual abuse and it is possible that the HIV positive perpetrators in these two cases may have not known about their HIV status. However, because of lack of adequate explanations about why young children are targeted for abuse, this finding may have added to suspicions about the belief in the virgin cure as a motivation for sexual abuse of young children discussed later in this thesis.

Furthermore, Larsen, Chapman, and Armstrong (1998), described the work of a team at Eshowe Provincial Hospital in KwaZulu-Natal where 99 cases of child sexual abuse were

encountered between 1985 and 1995. The study revealed that 65.9% of these children “had one or more sexually transmitted disease at presentation” (Larsen et al., 1998, p. 263). The retrospective studies focused on cases reported during apartheid. Interestingly, at the time of Larsen et al.’s (1998) study and that of van As et al. (2001) the sexually transmitted infections on children discovered by medical practitioners did not bring about public outcry and contestations about the explanations for sexual abuse of young children. It is not clear whether the media chose to ignore the statistics or whether such information was repressed by the apartheid state because the majority of the victims were reported to be black (Swart, Gilchrist, Butchart, Seedat and Martin, 2000).

De Villiers and Prentice (1996, p. 147) reviewed all cases presenting at the Child Abuse and Neglect Clinic, Transvaal Memorial Institute for Child Health and Development in Johannesburg between May 1988 and April 1989. Their figures indicated that 89.9% of the 227 child abuse complaints were sexual in nature. The perpetrators were almost invariably known to the child and biological family members accounted for 38% of perpetrators, and if all relations are included 66% of perpetrators consisted of family members with 7% being strangers. The majority of perpetrators were male. Although the authors reported the cases have stabilised, they also noted that the figures were higher than they were initially. For example they saw 248 cases in 1990, 285 in 1991, and 264 in 1992. Most of the victims were younger with 7% under 3 and 55% under ten years of age. It is therefore evident that the child sexual abuse problem was there during the apartheid South Africa and earlier and that it is not a phenomenon discovered after the democratization of the country in 1994.

Although hospital records are valuable sources of data, they were not an adequate means of establishing incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse for two reasons. Firstly, only those with more serious injuries and were more likely to be taken to hospitals had a chance

of being included in the study. Secondly, not all hospitals participated in the studies mentioned above. As a result, other researchers focused on retrospective studies with adult populations. However, these studies were also characterised by challenges due to reluctance to disclose associated with the stigma of being sexually victimised (Levett, 1989).

Levett (1989) conducted a study with a non-clinical, predominantly white group of 94 women students at the University of Cape Town. The study found that 43.6% of the group (41 women) had experienced 61 instances of sexual abuse under age 18 years. Attempted rape or rape had occurred in 17% of the self-identified sexually abused women, and 47.5% of the 61 instances of sexual abuse had involved intrusive physical contact. What was important in Levett's (1989) conclusion is that childhood sexual abuse experiences may be common among white and coloured South African women university students.

Similarly, Collings (1997) conducted a study with 640 female undergraduate psychology students at the University of Natal in Durban in 1992. His sample was also predominantly white. Of the 640 women who returned completed questionnaires, 223 (34.8%) reported a total of 270 experiences which met the definition of child sexual abuse used in the study. Collings (1997) also concluded that prevalence rates for child sexual abuse are significantly high among South African university women as compared to findings in American College women studies (Finkelhor, 1979).

In a study on the prevalence and characteristics of child sexual abuse, Madu and Pelzer (2001) administered retrospective self-rating questionnaire in a classroom setting. The questionnaires were completed by a total of 414 secondary school students in Standard 9

and 10² in three representative secondary schools in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. Their sample was predominantly black. They asserted that, because the prevalence rate for child sexual abuse among 414 participants in their study was 54.3% overall with 60% for males, 53.2% for females, the child sexual abuse rate was high. Although the findings by Madu and Pelzer, Levett and Collings all suggest high rates of child sexual abuse, their methodological as well as sample differences have led to different conclusions. Contrary to Madu and Pelzer's (2001) findings, Levett (1989) and Collings (1997) both suggest that girls are more likely to be sexually abused. The significance of the studies' findings is that they illustrate that child sexual abuse is a social problem that affects all races and classes.

Findings by Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle (2009) also illustrate the possible high rates of sexual violence across race and class in South Africa. The authors conducted a study in three districts in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal Provinces covering the city, rural and urban areas. They interviewed men aged 18-49 years in 215 areas which included 1738 households. Their sample included men of all racial groups and of a range of different socioeconomic backgrounds. Their findings suggested that 27.6% of the men had raped a male, 4.6% of men had raped in the past year, 14.3% had raped a current or ex-girlfriend, and that many men had raped more than once. The rape of a victim who was not a partner was more common as 11.7% of men had raped an acquaintance or stranger (but not a partner) and 9.7% had raped a partner, acquaintance and a stranger. The rape of partners was reported by 4.6% of men who alleged they never raped a woman who was not a partner.

The latest study to assess the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse was conducted by Deffery and Nicholas (2012). They had 213 participants, consisting of 73 males and 135

² Standard 9 and 10 are now referred to as Grade 11 and 12 and they are the last two years of full time secondary education in South Africa.

females. Participants were first year students at the University of Fort Hare in East London, South Africa. Their ages ranged from 17 to 53 years. Of the participants, 65 (31.0%) indicated that they were sexually abused when they were younger than 16 years. Of this, 31 (42.5%) were males and 34 (25.2%) were females. The ages at the time of the sexual abuse ranged from 5 years to 15 years, with a mean age of 11.52 years. At the time of the event 27.7% of the participants indicated that they were not harmed by sexually abusive experiences. This percentage increased to 43.1% at the time of completing the questionnaire. At the time of the sexual abuse 30.8% of the respondents indicated that they were extremely harmed by the sexual abuse experiences. This percentage had decreased to 16.9% at the time of completing the questionnaire. These findings suggest that there are various factors that would determine whether a person defines an experience as abusive.

The findings in the reviewed studies illustrated a multiplicity of explanations drawn using different methodologies, with participants who often struggled with disclosure of abuse experiences, with lack of common definitions for child sexual abuse as well as differences in the samples. Despite these challenges and the acknowledged fact that the incidence and prevalence figures are never reliable, there are reports which suggest incidence and prevalence rates in South Africa are higher than elsewhere in the world (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Such reports have labelled South Africa as the rape capital of the world (Human Rights Watch, 1995). What the evidence means for the thesis is that it suggests that young children in South Africa are more likely to be sexually abused than elsewhere. Furthermore, it highlights sexual abuse of young children as a special social problem in South Africa. It also illustrates that sexual abuse of young children is not a race or class issue and that contrary to the 'stranger danger' belief discussed in chapter two, the abuse is perpetrated by people the children know and depend on for protection. More importantly, it presents the problem as affecting both males and females but highlight the gendered nature of the problem.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Media coverage has led to raised critical consciousness in many South Africans who have since been calling for government action on the issue. The sexual abuse of baby Tshepang (see page 4) led to speculations as to why the sexual abuse of young children should occur. One powerful supposition, given the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, was about the 'virgin cleansing myth' and the rumours that traditional healers advise their patients to have sex with virgins to be cured of HIV/AIDS. Another theory concerned the nature of masculinity. Was baby rape an expression of masculinity? Was it possible that sexual violence by men against women and children was a tacitly accepted offshoot of communal values about masculinity in the South African context? Under Apartheid law, the status of African women was more or less that of a child; was it or is it possible that this established a notional sexual equivalence between children and women that implicitly condoned or made it difficult to resist the idea that women and children were equally and casually sexually available? If the patriarchal attitudes that went hand in hand with Apartheid were more intractable than the African National Congress thought, then perhaps this was bound up in the problem of sexual violence against children.

A sense of entitlement also appears to pervade the South African culture. A 1997 article argued that many perpetrators feel entitled to instant gratification and believe they have a unfettered right to release their "sexual energies" (Huber, Donaldson, Robertson, and Hlongweni, 1997). Some men have been taught that women and girls are nothing more than possessions. Thus, as Mercy Hlongweni, counsellor at Witwatersrand's trauma clinic in Johannesburg said, those committing violent crimes frequently use women's bodies "in a callous and careless way" (Dempster, 1997). The aforementioned article by Huber et al. chronicles one story in which a father raped his daughter while his wife was away from home. (When questioned about his behaviour, the father stated that he felt like sex, and since the wife was not available, he felt entitled to his daughter). This thinking explains why some

have come to refer to South Africa as being a rape-prone society. Professor. Rachel Jewkes of the South African Medical Research Council (MRC) believes “[y]ou don't get rape in a situation where you don't have massive gender inequalities. One of the key problems in [South Africa] is that people who commit rape don't think they are doing anything wrong.” (Dempster, 2002). Is there then something peculiar to the South African social and cultural context that makes children and especially very young children vulnerable to sexual abuse? It is against this background that this research was initiated and this thesis endeavours to explain how perpetrators in South Africa make sense of the child sexual abuse phenomenon, mainly focusing on young children under the age of six.

The main focus of this research was the explanations of perpetrators about the sexual abuse of young children. It was not therefore intended that the research would undertake any broad survey of the incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse nor how it specifically affects young children in South Africa as a whole. Neither was it anticipated that the research would create information of a statistically representative nature for the whole of South Africa. Rather the research focused on a population of incarcerated perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children in three of the nine provinces of South Africa – Limpopo, North West, and Gauteng Provinces. The overall aim of the study was to understand how perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children make sense of sexually abusive acts towards young children. It examines factors that motivate them to sexually abuse young children, goes beyond their narratives and look at how these men draw on culturally circulating stories to construct their own narratives about sexual abuse of young children which are specific to South Africa. In the conclusion the thesis makes recommendations for the development of more locally based intervention strategies to address child sexual abuse as a social problem in South Africa.

The research question for the study was: “how perpetrators make sense of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa”.

1.4 DEFINITIONAL ISSUES

Whilst the challenges of defining terms within the child sexual abuse field in an African context has been acknowledged (Pierce and Bozalek, 2004), it is important to highlight how key terms are used throughout this thesis. According to the Convention on the Rights of the child and the Children’s Act 38 of 2005 (2005, p. 204), “a *child* shall mean any person under eighteen years of age”. This study focused on the sexual abuse of children under the age of six. The age of victims was determined by the Infant Trust’s call for research which focused on young children or preschool children. Therefore, for purposes of this study the term *young children* is used to refer specifically to children who are victims of perpetrators in this study whose age ranged from zero to six years. Poor recording in DCS and SAPS discussed earlier in this chapter, led to sampling challenges, discussed in chapter three, which meant it was not always possible to have details of the victim in the sex offender files to be confined within the victim age group for this thesis.

It is also important to note that although I refer to some children as victims, the study examined the childhood experiences of perpetrators. Furthermore, some of the perpetrators in this study were still children during the interview or were defined as children when they committed sexual acts according to the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008. It is therefore important to include them in the definition of a *child*. The Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 (2008, p. 16) states that “in certain circumstances, a child means a person who is 18 years or older but under the age of 21 years whose matter is dealt with in terms of section 4(2). What this means is that these perpetrators will be dealt with as children and would be assessed by the probation officer prior to their preliminary hearing.

In South Africa the term perpetrator is used interchangeably with sex offender. I use the term *perpetrators* to refer to informants of this study who were convicted of sexual abuse of young children. I use *explanations* interchangeably with *narratives* throughout the thesis. The narrative is defined as “a device for making sense of a social action” (Czarniawska, 2005, p. 11). I draw on social constructionism to use perpetrator narratives to learn how they use their life experiences to make sense of their sexually abusive acts towards young children. In using their narratives I take into consideration the unpredictability and instability of the meaning making processes which is context and time specific and that I become part of the context and the impact my presence has in how the narrative is presented.

The term *child sexual abuse* carries different meanings for different professionals, researchers and the public. The term is often used interchangeably with terms such as infant sexual abuse, baby rapes, child rape, sexual molestation and sexual abuse of young children. In this thesis child sexual abuse will be used interchangeably with sexual abuse of young children, the term explained earlier in this chapter. The meaning of child sexual abuse is often influenced by mandates and goals professionals and researchers have as well as differing explanations within particular socio-cultural contexts about what constitute abusive behaviour (Goodyear-Brown, Fath and Myers, 2012; Haugaard, 2000). Although child sexual abuse is an age old problem, to date there is still no commonly accepted definition (Goodyear-Brown et al., 2012; Haugaard, 2000; La Fontaine, 1990). Literature illustrates that definitions emphasize one aspect over the other. Key aspects covered by definitions include the motive of the abuse, power differentials in terms of age and position of authority, nature of the abuse and whether it is contact or non-contact, circumstances of the abuse as well as the impact of the abuse on the child and his or her family (Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004).

Complexities around definitions may be exacerbated by the tendency, due to the paucity of research in Africa, to import dominant western definitions which often do not fit well with local African contexts. Lachman (2004) acknowledges the difficulties in defining child abuse in the African context due to variations in cultural attitudes. Definitions are either too narrow or too broad (Townsend and Dawes, 2004; Haugaard, 2000), making comparisons of findings across studies often impossible. Although the contestations about definitions might be reported to be problematic, they illustrate that the social constructions of childhood and meanings attached to these constructions change over time and space and impact on how sexual abuse of young children as a social problem is constructed. One definition that is commonly used is that of Finkelhor (1994, p. 33). It states that: “the terms sexual activities involving children refers to:

Activities intended for sexual stimulation. These activities exclude contact with a child’s genitals for caretaking purposes. They are generally categorized as contact sexual abuse and non-contact sexual abuse. Contact sexual abuse is touching of the sexual portions of the child’s body (genitals or anus) or touching the breasts of pubescent females, or the child’s touching the sexual portions of a partner’s body. Contact sexual abuse is of two types: Penetration, which includes penile, digital, and object penetration of the vagina, mouth, or anus, and non-penetration, which includes fondling of sexual portions of the child’s body, sexual kissing, or the child’s touching sexual parts of a partner’s body.

Noncontact sexual abuse usually includes exhibitionism, voyeurism, and the involvement of the child in the making of pornography. Sometimes verbal sexual propositions or harassment (such as making lewd comments about the child’s body) are included as well”.

Furthermore, Finkelhor explains that

“abusive conditions exist when the child’s partner has a large age or maturational advantage over the child; or the child’s partner is in a position of authority or in a caretaking relationship with the child; or the activities are carried out against the child using force or trickery. All of these conditions indicate an unequal power relationship and violate our notion of consensuality” (Finkelhor, 1994, p. 33).

In this thesis the definition as stipulated in the South African Children’s Act no 38 of 2005 is used. It states that:

“Sexual abuse, in relation to a child, means – (a) sexually molesting or assaulting a child or allowing a child to be sexually molested or assaulted; (b) encouraging, inducing or forcing a child to be used for sexual gratification of another person; (c) using a child in or deliberately exposing a child to sexual activities or pornography, or (d) procuring or allowing a child to be procured for commercial sexual exploitation or in any way participating or assisting in the commercial sexual exploitation of a child” (Children’s Act no 38 of 2005. c.1, p. 26).

Although the definition is not as comprehensive as Finkelhor’s, it highlights the shortcomings of empirical data available in South Africa. The definition does not highlight power differentials between the adult and the child as well as the harmful nature of abusive behaviour. However, “the term abuse is clearly linked to the notion of power” (Dawes, Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004, p. 5). What is significant about this definition is that it provides locally agreed and institutionalised explanations and it is broad enough to accommodate the complexities of child sexual abuse including varying motives, contact and non-contact abuse and that anybody, male or female, could be an abuser. It acknowledges that child sexual abuse may or may not involve the use of ‘force’. It also takes into account South Africa’s current socio-economic trends in line with the emergent use of technology in

pornography and the increasing tendencies to involve children in the sex trade industry taking advantage of their poor economic circumstances in line with Gil's (cited in Parton, 1985) argument that child sexual abuse is not an individual but a social problem.

Another important term used in the thesis is the 'myth'. Segal (2011, p. 590 - 591) defines a myth as "a story which can be true as well as false" and suggest that when a myth is false it often "holds a tighter grip" than when it is true because "adherence to myth lies in the proverbial face of the evidence against it". As shall be shown in chapter two, this explanation fits within the South African context where, despite lack of evidence, the virgin cleansing myth was the mostly used explanation for sexual abuse of young children by politicians and the media (Jewkes, 2004). In this thesis, the virgin cleansing myth "refers to the idea that a person can be cured or protected from AIDS by exposure through intercourse to the bodily fluids of a virgin" (Richter, 2003, p. 393).

1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

Chapter two examines previous research highlighting key explanations for sexual abuse of young children within the South African context. It also highlights major explanations used elsewhere identifying gaps which this study attempted to address. Chapter three presents the methodological choice for the study, the epistemological stance taken, and methods used throughout the research process.

The next four chapters describe the data. Chapter four presents perpetrator perceptions about HIV/AIDS and the virgin cleansing myth. Chapter five explores perpetrators' denial of responsibility for sexual abuse of young children. Chapter six examines perpetrators explanations about their belief in a sense of entitlement to sex. Chapter seven provides perpetrators explanations about their motives for sexual abuse of young children. Chapter

eight presents a discussion of the findings. Chapter nine concludes the thesis highlighting the study contribution, methodological limitations, implications for policy and practice and suggests areas of further research.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, literature on explanations for sexual abuse of young children is examined. The review has two goals. The first goal is aimed at providing a brief context within which western child sexual abuse explanations are drawn, illustrating how these explanations produce assumptions of child sexual abuse as an individualised problem. Most importantly, I argue that these western explanations are set up as if they are universal and transportable to any socio-cultural setting. I argue that this way of setting up child sexual abuse explanations raises questions about their applicability within the South African context. The second goal addresses these questions by examining South African explanations about the phenomenon and where applicable, themes explored were contrasted by international explanations. However, due to “the remarkably little research on perpetrators” (Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006, p. 2949) in South Africa, literature review included closely related studies involving community samples. Where South African studies were not adequate to address the research question, which focuses mainly on perpetrator explanations, a variety of sources including historical material and international literature were used when it was deemed important in this study. The method of reviewing literature took into consideration that this thesis is fundamentally about perpetrators’ socio-cultural context and not psychological explanations per se and therefore, included any such research which explored themes relevant to the research question. As shall be shown later in this chapter, the identified literature was not on perpetrators per se as it was chosen due to its relevance to the themes from the data chapters and also because the child sexual abuse field is under researched in South Africa.

In the light of this brief overview, and the epistemological stance in this thesis explained in the next chapter, the literature review will acknowledge but not privilege western explanations about childhood sexual abuse. Western explanations may or may not be applicable in the South African context. Therefore, for purposes of this study, as shall be shown later in this chapter, attempts were made to explore indigenous South African explanations of child sexual abuse to understand what it is that perpetrators say motivates some South African men to sexually abuse very young children.

2.2 EXPLANATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The emergence of media reports in 2001 about the rape of Baby Tshepang, a nine month old baby and other young children caused an outrage which brought to the public's attention the reported high rates of child sexual abuse in South Africa (Bird and Spurr, 2004). This emergence urged the public to debate about motivations for sexual abuse of young children (Jewkes, 2004, Lalor, 2004, Leclerc-Madlala, 2002). Although there was an agreement that child sexual abuse was a social problem, explanations offered about this phenomenon were debated. Some of the debated explanations within the South African context include rapid social change (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Lalor, 2004), the virgin cleansing myth emanating from the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Jewkes, 2004; Richter, 2003; Meier, 2002), patriarchy and gender inequality (Jewkes, 2012; Lalor, 2004; Jewkes, 2004; Richter, 2003; Meier, 2002), poverty (Jewkes, 2012; Dawes, Willenberg and Long, 2006; van Niekerk, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 1995) and the history of institutionalized violence during apartheid (Meier, 2002). This literature review explored themes relevant to the research question for this study. These include the virgin cleansing myth and HIV/AIDS, childhood adversities, poverty, patriarchy and gender inequality, and sexual interest in children.

2.2.1 The virgin cleansing myth and HIV/AIDS

There are debates within the South African society about possible connections between high rates of sexual abuse of young children and the high rates of HIV/AIDS. In response to the media reports, some scholars and practitioners have insisted that there is a possibility that perpetrators could be sexually abusing young children in an attempt to cure themselves of the virus by having sex with a virgin (Grimes, 2009; Murray and Burnham, 2009; Bowlby and Pitcher, 2002; Lobaido, 2001; Connor, 1999). For example, in 2002, IRIN, a service of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that:

“Among the theories advanced to explain the phenomenon is the apparently accepted myth that sex with a virgin cleanses one of HIV/AIDS. But that has ignited a renewed controversy over whether the folk tale alone is behind the sexual assaults against children that in some cases have been literally babies.

A recent survey conducted by UNISA at the Daimler Chrysler plant in East London, found that 18 percent of the 498 workers questioned believed that having sex with a virgin would cure HIV/AIDS.

A previous study in 1999 by sexual health educators in Gauteng - the country's economic hub - found that 32 percent of the participants interviewed indicated that they believed the myth” (IRIN, 2002).

Although perpetrator explanations are crucial for this study it is also important to understand the context within which the virgin cleansing explanations emerged. According to some commentators, the virgin cleansing myth, to those who believe in it, means that:

“a man can cleanse his blood of HIV/AIDS through intercourse with a virgin, but the girl herself would not be infected in the process” (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002, p. 92).

Cleansing suggests there is dirtiness which is explained as a state of pollution or illness which could be caused by factors including witchcraft, ancestors or nature (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002; Jewkes and Wood, 1999). For example Berglund (cited in Ashford, 2001, p. 23-24) quoted an informant's interpretation of the dangers of bewitched semen as saying:

“When a man fears that he has been treated secretly with medicines which work on his water (i.e. semen) he does not sleep with his wife. The water can cause sickness in her. So he does not put it into her. He goes to another woman. He tells her of his desire for her and her beauty. She agrees. He puts the water into her. Perhaps the water does not affect her because it was directed towards his wife. So he expels it in this other woman. Then he goes away. He comes to his home, being light (i.e. empty of evil). He cohabits with his wife and there is nothing that is seen (i.e. she does not get sick).”

Furthermore, Leclerc-Madlala (2002, p. 92) mentions two competing arguments to explain the virgin cleansing process and a possible explanation why young children are targeted. Firstly, the intact hymen is perceived as a shield against HIV virus. Secondly, there is a belief that the virus sticks to a wet surface and since the virgin is assumed to have a dry vaginal tract, she would be immune from viruses.

According to Berglund (1976, cited in Leclerc-Madlala, 2002, p. 92-93) the association of the therapeutic value of sex with a virgin and ethnomedical³ beliefs...

“may be found in the homeopathic principle which was described as a fundamental central tenet, namely sympathetic magic. Sympathetic magic draws upon

³ Ethnomedicine is an indigenous medical system which is based on a particular ethnic group's cultural beliefs and practices.

ethnopathological notions of homeopathy whereby 'like produces like'. Medical conditions are believed treatable by substances that are symbolically associated with the conditions. For example, ...cowardice is treatable by consuming pieces of a lion's heart."(Leclerc-Madlala, 2002, p. 92-93).

This belief suggests that the purity of the virgin has these magical healing powers to purify those who are in a state of dirtiness (Jewkes, 2004). In some of the African cultures some of the treatment options are revealed by ancestors to the traditional healers who would then provide instructions to their clients on the course of treatment. It is possible that the virgin cleansing myth, although not proven, was viewed as a magical treatment option in a similar way.

Furthermore, there are suggestions by researchers that the myth has been popularized amongst community members by some traditional healers who proclaimed the potency of the virgin cure in South Africa (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002). Peltzer, Mngqundaniso and Petros's (2006, p. 608) study on knowledge, beliefs and practices of traditional healers found that 21% of 233 traditional healers who participated in the study believed that there is a cure for AIDS. Furthermore, the suggestion that "large numbers of South Africans are known to consult with traditional healers" (Ross, 2008, p.15) suggests that people across the social strata (Steinglass, 2001, p. 3) do believe in traditional healers and could possibly be open to using the myth as an explanation⁴. This view suggests that the myth may have pervaded all sectors of society and become an active narrative amongst politicians and

⁴Traditional healers embody the indigenous African medical culture, which cannot be ignored (Green, 1994). They provide client-centred, personalized health care that is tailored to meet the needs and expectations of their patients. This and the respect they command from their clients, makes them strong communication agents for health and social issues (UNAIDS, 2002). Their services include bone setting and prescription of herbal medicine (WHO, 2002). There are contradictory reactions to traditional healing including "uncritical enthusiasm to uninformed scepticism".

professionals as well (Murray and Burnham, 2009; Bowlby and Pitcher, 2002). However, there are debated views about how widely the myth is known and believed.

Such explanations were also noted by researchers in other African studies such as Botswana (Mukumbira, 2004); Zimbabwe (Meursing et al, 1995) and Malawi (Lema, 1997). Traditional healers who distanced themselves from such practices alleged that there are some traditional healers who are known to engage in such practices although these accusations are denied (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002; Lema, 1997; Meursing et al., 1995). However, a focus group participant in a Zimbabwean study confirmed such practices, during one study, by stating that her sister's 9-year-old daughter became HIV positive when she was given to her uncle to "cleanse" himself from HIV and STDs (Meursing et al., 1995, p. 1697). The findings from these studies highlight the possible influence traditional healers might have in proclaiming the potency of the virgin cure and the possible harmful impact of such influence. However, as shall be illustrated throughout this review, most of the explanations are derived from retrospective studies with community samples (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002) some of which were student populations (Madu, 2001) and not from perpetrators. This was mainly due to the lack of perpetrator studies which may have offered a very different perspective about whether they were motivated by the need for a cure when they sexually abused young children. Although community studies were helpful, they are often limited in offering diverse views because sex as a topic is often a taboo. In addition, the stigma about HIV/AIDS brings with it the secrecy which would make it difficult for those who have not had the experience to understand motives. Therefore discussing motives about sexual abuse of young children and the myth would not adequately provide deeper insight into the problem.

The idea of using the virgin cleansing myth as an explanation to excuse sexual abuse of young children is not new to South Africa and other parts of the world. The emergence of

child sexual abuse as a social problem in Europe and North America highlight the extent to which the virgin cure, to heal sexually transmitted diseases, was used as an explanation to excuse child sexual abuse (Davidson, 2001; Fraser, 1925). In 1909, Dr Flora Pollack of John Hopkins Hospital had argued that the numbers of children with venereal diseases in New York City was far too high to be explained by activities of sexual perverts and as a result put forward the 'infectionist theory' (Smart, 2000; Fraser, 1925).

"Infectionists were not, she argued, perverts and took no sexual satisfaction from the rape of a child, rather they were engaged in a logical (although evil) act" (Smart, 2000, p. 59).

She also said the possibility of towel or toilet seat (Sacco, 2002) infections were rare but that they were just excuses by guilty perpetrators and that these excuses were obstructing the cause of justice and child protection (Smart, 2000). Earlier in 1857, Ambroise Tardieu, who is reported to have discovered cases of child sexual abuse perpetrated by parents criticised the "myth that sexual intercourse with a young girl helped cure venereal diseases" as an explanation for child sexual abuse (Labbé, 2005, p. 315).

The evidence presented during the child sexual abuse case of Robert James C in 1913 in Scotland further illustrate the long history of the use of indigenous remedies including the virgin myth (Davidson, 2001) as an explanation for child sexual abuse. Davidson's (2001, p.63) report illustrates that although some medical practitioners offered oversimplified opinions, to the High Court in Glasgow, by making claims that a belief that sex with a virgin cured venereal diseases was prevalent amongst the lower class and immigrants, others were aware that it was not a class specific issues. For example, in his evidence during the trial Dr James Devon, H.M. Prison Surgeon stated that the belief was held by "people of different places and different occupations" (High Court Precognitions cited in

Davidson, 2001, p. 63) illustrating that anybody in the socioeconomic strata can abuse a child sexually but most people do not.

Stereotyped opinions were not only common in Europe and North America (Finkelhor, 1979; Kidd and Simpson, 1924 cited in Fraser, 1925). They were also prevalent in South Africa prior to apartheid during colonisation. When the increase in cases of sexually transmitted infections on children was observed by the medical practitioners in Cape Town around 1925, Fraser (1925) questioned the possibility of virgin cleansing myth. He quickly ruled it out suggesting that:

“the coloured man in South Africa has not yet learned this appalling doctrine, and, therefore, no cases of such infection have been met with” (Fraser, 1925, p. 271).

What is interesting in his explanation is that lack of knowledge was a reason for the ‘Coloured’⁵ not to use the myth at that time. However, current debates suggest that Blacks⁶ believe in the myth because of lack of knowledge, and that sexual abuse of young children is possibly perpetrated by Black males (Pierce, 2003; Schneider and Fassin, 2002) an aspect which is discussed later in the current study.

In cases where the virgin myth was not used as an excuse, the blame for child sexual abuse was directed at ‘perverts’ (Smart, 2000), ‘strangers’, ‘psychopaths’ and the ‘poor’ (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010). In South Africa, during colonization, the “hand of the infected coloured nurse girl” (Fraser, 1925, p. 271) was blamed for spreading sexually transmitted infections. It seems reasonable to suppose that such reports may have been used to avert

⁵ Coloured is a race classification which was coined during apartheid to refer to mixed race and is still applicable.

⁶ Within South Africa the main race classifications include Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. Capital letters are used to refer to a people in the particular race group. I am using Black, White or Coloured purposely.

the gaze from the real perpetrators who are more often carers and family acquaintances of the victims.

Contrary to Fraser's opinion, recent assumptions about the prevalence of the virgin myth bear similarities to racial and class biases made in North America and Europe (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010; Smart, 2000). The statement by the Northern Cape minister of health in South Africa in 2001, suggest some partiality about the myth being prevalent in rural areas:

"I suspect that at least part of the reason these children were raped is because of the myth held in rural areas by men with HIV that they can cleanse themselves by having sex with a virgin. I do a lot of Aids education; this myth is firmly entrenched and we are doing our best to dispel it" (McGreal, 2001).

Some researchers suggest that some perpetrators are not aware of the virgin cleansing myth (see HSRC, 2002). Others suggest that the virgin cleansing myth is widely known (Leclerc-Madlala, 1997) whereas others (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose Junius and Malala, 2005) found that although participants in their study knew about the myth, they also knew that it was false.

Researchers (Leclerc-Madlala, 2002; Ashford, 2001) in South Africa have pointed out that there was lack of empirical evidence to suggest the virgin myth was a motivator for sexual abuse of young children. Furthermore, other researchers (Epstein and Jewkes, 2009; Posel, 2005a; Jewkes, 2004; Jewkes, Martin, Penn-Kekana, 2002) argue that the virgin myth is not a motivating factor for rapes of young children. Furthermore, there are suggestions that such statements often rely on imprecise references due to lack of adequate evidence as the phenomenon "has not been satisfactorily investigated or substantiated" (Lalor, 2004, p. 452).

Kleijn (2010) researched psychosocial profiles of ten South African perpetrators of sexual abuse of children less than three years and found that none of her ten respondents reported that they were motivated by the virgin myth to abuse young children. There were similar findings most recently in Malawi (Mtibo, Kennedy and Umar, 2011). There is also some evidence of a similar explanation in Scotland in 1913 (Davidson, 2001). What was interesting is that it was the prosecutors and investigators in Scotland who used the myth as an explanation for perpetrator behaviour. This process can be likened to the emergence of media generated 'moral panics', defined as a 'threat to societal values and interests' by Cohen (1972, p. 9). During moral panics behaviours perceived as morally reprehensible are often 'stylized and stereotypically represented by the media', eliciting a judgemental response by those 'in power', (Sands, 1998).

In South Africa, due to the paucity of research in the field, debates about sexual abuse of young children relied on information disseminated by both the electronic and paper media. As a result, public reliance on the media meant that reports were treated as facts without evidence. Under such circumstances, media could be used to divert the gaze away from the problem of practices that perpetuated the tolerance of sexual violence to protect the patriarchal ideology. For example, an internet search on child sexual abuse and the virgin myth yields articles on the virgin myth between 1998 and 2002 when most of the high profile cases of sexual abuse of young children emerged. Media reports illustrated that although explanations offered at that time suggested that the virgin myth was motivating sexual abuse of young children, there was still no adequate explanation of why so many young children were sexually abused (Phillips, 2001). It was during this period when President Mbeki was referred to as an AIDS dissident (Human Rights Watch, 2004; Schneider and Fassin, 2002) for assertions that there is no link between HIV and AIDS. Media reportage tended to die down at around 2002 when government approved the roll

out of antiretroviral drugs as well as post-exposure prophylaxis⁷ (PEP) for rape victims (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Although TV educational programmes such as Soul City made attempts to educate the South African community about HIV/AIDS and that the virgin myth is false (Soul-city-series-9, 2009), the myth does not seem to have died down completely. It seems there are still reports suggesting that this line of reasoning persists and that the virgin myth is still viewed by some members of the community and some professionals as a motivator for sexual abuse of young children (Tawfik, 2011; Dube, 2010). In support of medical practitioners Dr Pitcher and Dr Bowlby's suggestion that the virgin cure is motivating sexual abuse of young children, Earl-Taylor (2002) argued that perpetrators did not have a sexual or power motive. I argue that the explanations in this literature review have not adequately addressed the relevance of the virgin myth as a motive for child sexual abuse mainly due to the paucity of research on perpetrators in South Africa. Further questions need to be asked about how widely the belief is held and how often it is acted upon (Jewkes, 2004). As shall be shown in Chapter four, this thesis explored some of these issues.

2.2.2 Childhood adversities

Individuals who are exposed to adversities during their childhood⁸ have been shown to be at risk of becoming sexually abusive later in life (Jewkes, 2012; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, Dunkle, 2011; Dunkle, Jewkes, Nduna, Jama, Levin, Sikweyiya, and Koss, 2007; Emmert and Butchardt, 2000; Bornman et al. 1998) through research in South Africa and

⁷ Post-exposure prophylaxis is a short and affordable course of antiretroviral drugs administered to survivors of sexual violence aimed at reducing the risk of HIV transmission following exposure to HIV.

⁸ Childhood means more than just the time between birth and the attainment of adulthood. The Convention defines childhood as a separate space from adulthood (UNICEF, 2004).

internationally (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010; Whitaker, Le, Hanson, Baker, McMahon, Ryan, Klein, and Rice, 2008; Malamuth et al., 1991). The explanations emphasize the significant role of childhood experiences in the development of the self-concept later in life (Sondeling, 1993). Research from South Africa suggests that childhood abuse is an explanatory factor for negative behavioural outcomes later in life including criminal behaviour (Jewkes, 2012; Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000; Wood, 1998); intimate partner violence (Jewkes, 2012; Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama, and Sikweyiya, 2006) and sexual abuse (Jewkes, 2012; Kleijn, 2010; Wood, 1998). It is therefore important to examine literature on childhood adversities to understand how these adversities impact on the likelihood of subsequent perpetration of abuse, or how perpetrators use such experiences to make sense of sexual abuse of young children.

Some of the childhood adversity exposures include physical and emotional abuse (Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000; Bornman et al. 1998), divorce, institutionalisation (Jewkes, 2012), domestic violence (Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999; Edleson, 1999), parental substance misuse (Tyler and Melander, 2012), childhood sexual abuse (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009) and poverty (Petersen et al., 2006; Lalor, 2004). Furthermore, a UK based study (Draper and Hancock, 2011) and Whitaker et al.'s (2008) review of on risk factors for perpetration of child sexual abuse in western countries identified family disruption through loss of a parent as one of the adverse childhood experiences which may heighten risks for offending.

Physical and emotional abuse

Most scholars such as Bornman et al. (1998) have argued that “the social matrix and the long history of oppression, poverty and exploitation in the country” (Bornman et al., 1998, p. 352) is to blame for inculcating a culture of violence which has been tolerated and

accepted as normative within families and communities in South Africa, encouraging women to endure the abuse and men to perpetrate sexual violence. There are debated views about possibilities that exposure to violence during childhood could socialise children into a culture of using violence to resolve differences as well as normalising the use of force, including sexual violence, to maintain control. In an attempt to explain the perpetration of sexual abuse of young children, researchers' (Jewkes, 2012; Kleijn, 2010; Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006; Abrahams' Jewkes, Hoffman, and Laubsher, 2004; Jewkes, 2002; Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999; Gibson, 1991) arguments have often focused on varied risk factors to illustrate how some men become sexually abusive whereas others do not.

Gibson (1991) argued that exposure to violence is dehumanising for children as it socialises them into a culture of violence which according to Chikane (cited in Gibson, 1991) devalues human life. In support of the view that using physical punishment on children taught children that the use of force was an appropriate way of dealing with conflict, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (All Africa Special Report, 2007, p. 5) made the following comments in support the abolition of corporal punishment:

“Progress towards abolishing corporal punishment is being made, but millions of the world’s children still suffer from humiliating acts of violence and these violations of their rights as human beings can have serious and lifelong effects. Violence begets violence and we shall reap a whirlwind”.

Furthermore, other researchers have reported findings suggesting the risk of sexual violence is heightened in situations where violence is used as a way of resolving conflicts (Abrahams' Jewkes, Hoffman, and Laubsher, 2004; Jewkes, 2002). Similarly, researchers (Kleijn, 2010; Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006; Wood,

Welman and Netto, 2000; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999) suggest that children learn to become violent and engage in sexual violence through adverse childhood experiences such as exposure to domestic violence by their parents and or by significant others. What is argued is that violence impacts on brain development in children and results in them becoming more aggressive and impulsive and less empathetic. The suggestion is that they are likely to be drawn to associate with male peers who are preoccupied with masculinities that emphasise strength and toughness and dominance over women and one way of demonstrating this is by feeling they should always need and be ready for sex. Another one is by thinking women should be under their control and that they can demonstrate their strength by showing they are stronger and tougher than women/girls by raping them. (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher and Hoffman, 2006; Abrahams and Jewkes, 2005; Wood and Jewkes, 1998).

Wood and Jewkes (1998) conducted a study in Umtata in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, to gain an understanding of the circumstances and contexts of violence in young people's sexual relationships. Although this is not a study exclusively conducted with perpetrators, their findings illustrate how the social environment, where most perpetrators may be raised in, may socialise the youth into violence as a way of managing conflict. They reported that:

“violence in dating-relationships must be understood in the broader context of life in Ngangelizwe [Umtata, Eastern Cape Province] where beating was used in a whole variety of contexts as a strategy for punishment and a way of gaining ascendancy and control over others. Thus girls fought with other girls, neighbours with neighbours, boys with other boys, husbands beat wives, parents beat children, and teachers and

circumcision⁹ school leaders beat their pupils. In this way the use of violence was ‘normal’” (Wood and Jewkes, 1998, p. 2).

These explanations suggest that children growing up in violent families do not only learn from observation but from taking part in or being subjected to continuous violence. They also suggest that under such circumstances the likelihood of child physical abuse is heightened, further exacerbating both the emotional and physical impact on children. Findings in South Africa resonate with those conducted internationally highlighting physical and emotional abuse during childhood as explanatory factors for perpetration of child sexual abuse (Sigurdsson, Gudionsson, Asgeirsdottir, Sigfusdottir, 2010; Whitaker et al., 2008; Finkelhor, 1991). Although both girls and boys are exposed to childhood abuse (Martsolf and Draucker, 2008) the findings in the studies cited earlier focused on the impact of violence on boys who were victimized than on girls.

A study among Finnish and Danish adolescents, examined the impact on girls as well and found that both girls and boys exposed to domestic violence developed antisocial behaviour (Peltonen, Ellonen, Larsen and Helweg-Larsen, 2010). However, research findings acknowledge that the majority of perpetrators of sexual violence are men (Finkelhor, 1994). Whereas explanations offered are usually derived from studies on perpetrators who are often male leading to suggestions that the impact of abuse is more visible in males, Sigurdsson, Gudionsson, Asgeirsdottir and Sigfusdottir’s (2010) study included both males and females and found that domestic violence as a risk factor impacts negatively on males and not females in terms of its influence on sexual violence.

⁹ Circumcision schools are responsible for managing the rites of passage of youth from childhood into adulthood. Although they played a role in sexual socialisation of youth, there are suggestions that their role has been eroded resulting in these institutions giving young men an idea that they have a sense of entitlement to sex without impressing upon them that they also have sexual responsibility (Vincent, 2008).

Further explanations suggested that boys often imitate aggressive behaviours they were subjected to as victims or as witnesses to abuse perpetrated against their mothers (Abrahams and Jewkes, 2005) more than girls. Therefore, there are suggestions that being raised in a patriarchal society which socialises boys into manhood early in life (Delious and Glaser, 2002) and exposure to domestic violence during childhood may teach boys that:

“hegemonically masculine men are expected to be in control of women, and that violence may be used to establish this control” (Jewkes and Morrell, 2010, p. 1).

This aspect is dealt with in the next section. Therefore, it is suggested that exposure to violence during childhood (Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama, Sikweyiya, 2006) may be part of an explanatory factor in the socialization of males into the use of violence later in life (Richter, 2003). This also suggests that exposure to violence often encourages boys to define and position themselves as having more power and being superior to women and children and to believe that using physical force is acceptable. Researchers argue that this “normative nature of violence” when experienced during childhood is:

“reinforced for both men and women, thus increasing the likelihood of male perpetration and women’s acceptance of abuse” (Jewkes, 2002, p. 1427).

Vogelman’s (1990) study was conducted with nine incarcerated rapists. He also highlighted the risks of domestic violence on children as witnesses and victims adding that:

“This is especially significant in relation to women, since the violence boys witness is, more often than not, directed against their mothers. Their mothers' response often fits the traditional mode of behaving - passive and accepting. Said one rapist, "She just used to take it all these years. It's like this and, I must accept it"".

Although Vogelmann's study (1990) did not consist of perpetrators of sexual abuse of very young children, in Kleijn's (2010) study all ten participants were reported to have abused very young children aged three and younger. All the participants in Kleijn's study reported suffering childhood physical and emotional abuse by mostly mothers and other caregivers. Kleijn's findings bear some similarity with other research findings (Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000) which reported that half of the twenty young perpetrators, aged between seven and fifteen, in their study reported suffering childhood physical and emotional abuse perpetrated by their carers.

Most researchers (Jewkes, Fulu, Roselli and Garcia-Moreno, 2013; Kleijn, 2010; Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman, and Laubscher, 2004) argue that exposure to violence during childhood has adverse effects. However several scholars such as Levett (2004) and Gibson (1991) argued that there is no direct relationship between childhood adversities and being violent later in life to support the idea that "violence begets violence". Other researchers (Boutwell, 2011, p. 559) also note that the issue remains largely unresolved because most of the children who are physically abused "do not develop aggressive tendencies". Although the link between childhood abuse and abusive behaviour later in life is not adequately supported, reviews (Jewkes, 2012; Whitaker et al., 2008) and studies (Jewkes, 2013) on sexual abuse suggest that children who are abused are more at risk of becoming abusers later in life. I argue that the likelihood of abusive behaviour later in life depends on the child's agency in terms of how he or she interprets and reacts to abuse as well as circumstances in his or her socio-cultural environment.

Absent parenting

Whereas witnessing parental domestic violence is said to provide a platform on which children learn to be violent (Abrahams, Jewkes, Laubscher and Hoffman, 2006), there are also suggestions that absent parenting is equally problematic as it deprives children of role

models (Gear and Ngubeni, 2002; Byrnes, 1996). In a South African context, the forced migratory labour system during apartheid is said to have disrupted family life and eroded the morale of the workforce which was housed in dehumanizing men only hostels (Ramphela, 1991). These male only hostels were reportedly characterised by unsanitary conditions and overcrowding with more than ten men in a room. Stringent migratory labour laws prevented men to bring their wives from rural areas. As a result, there were suggestions that homosexual rapes would take place under these circumstances emasculating men, mostly fathers, and leaving children without role models in rural areas (Gear and Ngubeni, 2002; Byrnes, 1996). Under circumstances where wives and children were not allowed, children grew up without their fathers. Over time the problem with absent fathers is that some men do not feel obligated to play a social fathering role when they have children. Therefore, others (Ramphela, 1991) have argued that the anchor in black people's lives was systematically destroyed by apartheid. Pinnock¹⁰ (cited in Wilson, 2006, p. 32) illustrated the destruction of black people's lives to be:

"like a man with a stick breaking spider webs in a forest. The spider may survive the fall, but he can't survive without his web. When he comes to build it again he finds the anchors gone, the people are all over, and the fabric of generations lost. Now the family is taken out of this environment where everything is safe and known. It is put in a matchbox in a strange place. All social norms have suddenly been abolished. Before, the children who got up to mischief in the streets were reprimanded by neighbours. Now there's nobody, and they join gangs because that's the only way to find friends"

Similarly, Delious and Glaser's (2002) historical research in South Africa suggest that colonisers brought Christianity, undermining African values and ways of managing

¹⁰ Oscar Wolheim, the first warden of the Cape Flats Distress Association's quote cited in Don Pinnock's paper at the Carnegie conference in 1984.

sexuality. The introduction of Christianity by colonizers was fraught with contradictions as it preached about family values whilst at the same time migratory labour system was introduced forcing men to leave their families in rural areas in search of jobs in urban areas. Their data also suggest that migration led to absent parenting, loss of parental authority and mainly loss of paternal responsibility. In addition, these authors suggested that these changes brought with them a break up in the rites of passage for young people. Suggestions that, historically, Africans had systems of rites of passage which ensured smooth transition into adulthood which made young people accountable for their sexuality and respectful about young women's choices, tend to portray societal practices as uniform and static. They report that although Africans attempted to continue with practices to teach young men about manhood, life in urban areas did not make it possible. But of course, in any society bad parenting or smooth transitions may occur at any time despite imposed changes similar to those imposed during apartheid. Problems of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa may be associated with a disruption of socialisation process during childhood. Although colonisation and apartheid have contributed to the tolerance of and the culture of violence, I argue that they could not be used as key explanatory factors for sexual abuse because those who chose to act inappropriately towards women and children knew the rules even though they may have not understood how their behaviour could be interpreted as inappropriate.

Consequently, the loss of parental responsibility mostly by fathers, communal socialisation by peers under the watchful eye of adults in the community were reportedly replaced, in some areas, by gangs who sought to create space for peer learning and support in mixed ethnic groups in urban areas (Delious and Glaser, 2002). Other literature in South Africa has documented the negative impact of gang culture on endemic crime and sexual violence (Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993; Mokwena, 1991).

The absence of role models or fathers has been cited in explanations of child sexual abuse (Kleijn, 2010). Kleijn reported that some informants did not live with their fathers and others did not even know their fathers. . It is interesting that this is given as an explanation for child sexual abuse because it is common practice for children in South Africa to live away from their families. Sibanda and Zuberi (cited in Sibanda, 2011) suggested that in 1996 less than 65% of children aged 0-5 lived with their mothers amongst Blacks as compared to 85% amongst Whites in South Africa. More importantly, it is estimated that 60% of the children in South Africa do not have regular contact with their fathers (SADHS, 2005).

Nduna and Jewkes' (2011) study illustrated challenges inherent in undisclosed paternity and that finding out one's father's identity is often accidental and without the support of carers. Although attempts by children to find out about their identity were motivated by adverse childhood experiences, such attempts were reported to heighten risks of possible rejection by their current families (Nduna and Jewkes, 2011). Researchers argued that such experiences put children already experiencing abuse under emotional strain removing any chance for resilience (Kleijn, 2010; Gibson, 1991), making it difficult for them to make sense of who they are. According to Owusu-Bempah (2007) socio-genealogical connectedness is crucial for child development and not knowing who one is means they have no cultural or historical point of reference in the construction and production of their identities. Garrett (2010, p. 679) referred to these struggles in the construction of identity as "failure to root" meaning they had no appropriate role models and opportunities to learn appropriate ways of managing themselves and their relationships with others.

Finkelhor (1981) has reported that research findings on incarcerated offenders have established definite histories of childhood adversity further suggesting that the risk could

be heightened by the absence or unavailability of parents or those who are present but engage in conflict. Although the literature does not provide conclusive evidence about the impact of the absence of a parent or unknown paternity during childhood on behaviour, researchers (Draper and Hancock, 2011; Glasser, Kolvin, Campbell, Glasser, Leitch and Farrelly, 2001) found in their study that children who have lost a parent through death were more predisposed to negative developmental outcomes, including antisocial behaviour later in life especially if the loss of a parent happens before the age of 16. However, reviews on parental separation suggest that although it may be a risk factor in child development, no differences were identified between child abusers and non-abusers (Jewkes, 2012; Seto and Lalumiere, 2010) illustrating that sexually abusive behaviour cannot be easily predetermined.

Although the South African studies made a significant contribution in understanding the role of childhood abuse in the use of violence later in life, data in these studies (Abrahams and Jewkes, 2005) was collected from randomly selected individuals in the community and not from perpetrators. Men who participated in these studies reported perpetrating sexual violence against older women and girls. Furthermore, perpetrator explanations of their childhood and how they used these experiences to make sense of sexual abuse of young children have not been adequately explored.

Perpetrators in Kleijn's (2010) study reported multiple victimizations during their childhoods. What was interesting in this group of perpetrators is that although they claimed multiple victimizations, childhood sexual abuse was not mentioned as an explanation in this study. Researchers elsewhere have argued that there is a danger in focusing on single explanations for perpetration of sexual abuse when more often some children experience different forms of abuse and neglect simultaneously (Cawson et al., 2000). Finkelhor, Ormrod and Turner (2007, p. 21) referred to this as "polyvictimization". Felitti (2002) suggests that polyvictimization is a risk factor for the victim's development. The

explanations highlight the importance of exploring diverse explanations for a deeper understanding of the child sexual abuse phenomenon.

Childhood sexual abuse

There is a scarcity of research on sexual abuse of very young children in South Africa. One of the studies (Kleijn, 2010) which focused on this area did not, as explained earlier, address a history of childhood sexual abuse. Although Wood, Welman and Netto's (2000) study reported that half of the twenty participants reported childhood sexual abuse, their focus was on profiling than seeking explanations for their offending.

International studies which examined explanations of sexual offending illustrate that amongst risk factors for sexual abuse of young children, a history of childhood sexual abuse was found to be the most researched explanation (Seto and Lalumiere, 2010). International researchers argue that childhood sexual abuse is the most important explanation for the perpetration of child sexual abuse for the following reasons: early exposure to sex could encourage interest in inappropriate sexual acts (Connolly and Woollons, 2008); preoccupation with sexual acts and false beliefs about sex (Sigurdsson, Gudjonsson, Asgeirsdottir, Sigfusdottir, 2010); masturbation and could be the beginning of sexual arousal to children and to sexual violence (Marshall and Barbaree, 1990). Burton (2003, p. 277) conducted research on 179 adolescent sexual abusers and "in examination of relationships, gender, modus operandi, and acts" came to a conclusion that "the sexually abused youth were likely to repeat what was done to them". Their conclusion illustrate a deterministic 'cycle of abuse' explanation which does not take into consideration situational context by predicting that the abused is more likely to become an abuser later in life.

Reviews of studies on childhood sexual abuse (Seto and Lalumie`re, 2010; Bromberg and Johnson, 2001; Wood, Welman, and Netto, 2000) illustrate that most studies suggest a

cyclical relationship between being sexually abused early in life and later becoming an abuser further suggesting that if the cycle is not broken the likelihood of abuse occurring over generations is possible. They found that an explanation of why victims follow different paths through which some perpetrate abuse whereas others do not is that victims perceive their abusive experiences differently and that there are also differences in perceptions between males and females. Baljon (2011) made similar claims. Although the explanations highlight that not all victims of childhood sexual abuse would later become perpetrators, the importance of the cycle of abuse is emphasized by most researchers (Burton, 2003).

Although some of these explanations may translate into the South African context, not enough research has been conducted on male victims. There is more literature on adult female victims and their male perpetrators of sexual abuse. More research is required on male victims of sexual abuse (van Niekerk and Rzygula, 2010), as recent findings suggest the problem of male sexual abuse exists in South Africa (Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Research in South Africa has only recently started exploring sexual abuse against males (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009; Andersson and Ho-Foster, 2008). Earlier work on sexual abuse of men by men focused on prisons and hostels set up for migrant workers during apartheid (Gear, 2002; Ramphela, 1991).

Kleijn's study has, therefore, made a significant contribution in highlighting childhood histories of perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children. However, the findings of her study suggest that for her sample, childhood sexual abuse was not used as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children. It is possible that the stigma attached to being a victim of rape associated with victim blame, shame and a possibility of not being believable may have contributed, making it difficult for abused boys to report (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009). Furthermore, research suggests that childhood sexual abuse experiences may cause

embarrassment, guilt, anger, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sexual dysfunction, sleep disturbances, withdrawal from relationships, violent behaviour and attempted suicide for both male and female victims (Jewkes, Sen, and Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Due to the tensions between traditional masculinity and victimhood (Baljon, 2011), there are suggestions that it is possible that the anger of being sexually abused may translate into identification with the aggressor where the abused becomes the abuser (Ganzevoort, 2006; Burton, 2003).

However, other factors related to non-disclosure relate to fears that a male that is sexually abused would be perceived as weaker and more feminine, a trait which is undesirable to young men (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009) who want to maintain their masculinity. It is therefore possible that males who may have been sexually abused may not always disclose the abuse during research.

Ganzevoort's (2006, p. 1) study attempted to understand how masculinities would influence how victims made sense of abusive experiences and identified four messages that determine how the abused would respond. The responses often yielded different outcomes for men and women. They are:

“gender messages, traumatisation messages, coping messages, and religious messages” (Ganzevoort, 2006, p. 1).

Some of these explanations suggest that the abuse emphasizes for girls that they are women and objects to be used and abused. It also gives the same message to abused boys emphasizing they are not men as they can be objectified or feminized in the same way as a woman (Ganzevoort, 2006). The suggested implications are that male to male sexual abuse would be more traumatic for boys as it possibly creates confusion about sexual orientation

as well. Such a scenario, when played out in a patriarchal society such as South Africa, makes it problematic for males raised in such a society to disclose sexual abuse.

In contrast, research findings suggest that sexual abuse of males becomes more complicated when the abuse is perpetrated by a female. Andersson and Ho-Foster's (2008) findings have illustrated that although most research findings suggest that perpetrators are male, the phenomenon of female perpetrated abuse exists in South Africa. 41% of their participants reported being sexually abused by females, 32% by males and 27 by both. Another interesting finding was that female perpetrated abuse was reported to be more common in urban areas whereas male perpetrated abuse was common in rural areas.

However, in their review of literature of female perpetrated abuse internationally Gannon and Rose (2008) claimed that sexual abuse perpetrated by females, though a serious problem, is rarely reported and under researched. Furthermore, when there is an acknowledgement that women perpetrate abuse, it is often suggested that women do not commit abusive acts alone as it is alleged that they are often coerced into such acts by men (Gannon and Cortoni, 2010). Suggesting that only men have agency in sexually abusive acts ignores the relational nature of power.

In contrast to Gannon and Cortoni's (2010) view, research in South Africa has shown that women can perpetrate sexual abuse on their own. In an Eastern Cape study (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009, p. 529) which aimed at exploring meanings of sexual coercion of young men and boys in rural South Africa, 31 men aged between 18 and 25 were interviewed. The findings suggested that circumstances of abuse as well as participants' perceptions of them were different. What is important to note is that in a society where sexual violence is widespread it is possible that abusive behaviour may not be defined as such. Coercive acts by men could be viewed as a 'violation' and cause anger. On the other hand participants in

Sikweyiya and Jewkes' (2009) were reported to perceive coercive acts by older women as a "temptation" for sexual exploration which was reacted to differently and "did not make them feel good" (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009, p. 529). How they felt depended on whether they felt pride for being desirable or at risk of a sexually transmitted disease.

The main issue for some of the male victims was that the act of abuse by someone more powerful rendered them powerless. The power dynamics were complicated when the perpetrator was female because that suggested the male victim's manhood becomes questionable as a female assumes a position of power to determine terms in sexual relations. Although there were reports about anger and the urge to revenge the abuse directly on male perpetrators, the retaliation on women was not reported (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009).

The findings by Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2009) made a significant contribution in this under researched field in South Africa. In my view, the findings by Andersson and Ho-Foster's (2008) and those of Sikweyiya and Jewkes' (2009) illustrated that there is no rural/urban divide in terms of where the problem of female perpetrated abuse may happen. However, Sikweyiya and Jewkes' sample consisted of sexually victimised men who may or may have not perpetrated sexual abuse of young children. The study did not explore whether their victimization increased risk factors for them to be sexually abusive towards young children. Even if it did, the sensitivity of the subject and shame related to the abuse would make it impossible for those who were not caught to disclose. Hence, the importance of using perpetrator samples to understand how they would use such experiences to make sense of their motivations for sexual abuse of young children.

Although long term implications for childhood sexual abuse on males does not seem to have been adequately documented in South Africa, western studies suggest that childhood sexual abuse may have negative developmental outcomes including sexual offending later in life (Connolly and Woollons, 2008; Whitaker, Le, Hanson, Baker, McMahon, Ryan, Klein and Rice, 2008). Other proponents of this view (Renshaw, 1994 cited in Bromberg and Johnson, 2001) further suggested that there is a likelihood of childhood sexual abuse amongst men who are convicted for sexual violence than non-offenders.

In a study on prevalence of factors associated with male perpetration of sexual abuse of non-partner women and of men, and the reasons for sexual abuse from nine sites in Asia and the Pacific across six countries, Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka, Jewkes, Fulu, Roselli and Garcia-Moreno (2013, p. 214) found that:

“men with a history of victimisation, especially child sexual abuse and having been raped or otherwise sexually coerced themselves were more likely than were those without such past to have perpetrated either type of rape”.

These findings can be seen to support a ‘cycle of violence’ explanation of abuse. However, there have been significant critiques of this explanation (e.g. Levett 2004). Interestingly in Salter et al.’s (2003) longitudinal study 26 men in a sample of 224 male adults who were abused were reported to have become sexually abusive later in life. It may be that when males are abused they often internalise the role of the abuser and externalise their behavioural response whereas the female victims are made to internalise sexual objectification by their abusers and internalise their response. Such explanations are often used over time to blame female victims for their abuse allowing perpetrators to position themselves as victims and encouraging justifications for sexually abusive behaviour.

Other explanations suggest that individuals who have support systems including stable family backgrounds early in life are often resilient to the impact of childhood adversity (DuMont et al., 2007, p. 270). However, scholars have reported that the socio-economic and familial support systems within communities were destroyed by apartheid's migratory labour system leaving no safety net for resilience for children experiencing abuse (Ramphela, 1991) and for guidance during childhood (Delious and Glaser, 2002) in South Africa.

In contrast to the cycle of abuse explanation, there are suggestions that the abused may use "four differing narratives about their experiences" to make sense of abuse, that is, "narratives of silence; narratives of ongoing suffering; narratives of transformation; and narratives of transcendence" (Hunter (2010, p. 176). Depending on social contexts narratives may change over time or the abused children may either position themselves as victims or as survivors. Martself and Draucker's (2008, p. 339) argument that the path chosen is "strongly influenced by others who either reinforce or challenge the family legacy" illustrates that positions are not fixed and that they are socially constructed in relation to others and can therefore not be predicted. Although these studies have illustrated that perpetrators might position themselves as victims they did not explain how sexual abuse victimhood motivates perpetrators to sexually abuse very young children.

In a minority of cases it has been reported that some male victims may have not perceived childhood sexual abuse experiences as abusive but as "developmental rites of passage, part of a learning process" (Widom and Morris, 1997, p. 42) towards manhood. Furthermore, there are suggestions that some victims may have been sexually aroused (Martinson cited in Bromberg and Johnson, 2001; Sandfort and Everaerd, 1990). These explanations illustrate that victims are often tormented and further violated by suggestions that they

enjoyed it when in fact they were violated (Gavey, 2005). This adds further, a layer of complexity and difficulty for victims of sexual abuse.

Similarly, other theorists, including Marshall and Barbaree, and Hall and Hirschman (Ward, Polaschek and Beech, 2006; Marshall and Barbaree, 1990) have explained the risks of early exposure to sexual stimuli in sexual violence. They claim that children who are sexually abused develop deviant sexual urges learned during acts of abuse and that subsequent to the abuse they depend on masturbation to cope with life stressors. Again, these explanations illustrate how childhood adversities are often used to account for the development of sexual violence. However, they focus on individual factors, are more psychological, and biological ignoring sociological factors such as poverty, gender and cultural aspects which perpetuate sexual violence. While they support claims that childhood sexual abuse may be a risk factor for future sexual offending, they fail to provide a convincing argument and adequate evidence to support the cycle of abuse argument which is not only offering pathological explanations but also disregarding dominant societal explanations used during socialisation to normalise and legitimate sexual violence. I argue that the cycle of abuse explanations perpetuate the tolerance of sexual violence. This tolerance encourages the use of problematic justifications which creates and sustains patterns of sexually abusive behaviour by explaining it away in a way that legitimises it.

2.2.3 Poverty

Although the existence of one risk factor may be detrimental for child development, there are suggestions that risks are heightened by the simultaneous existence of more than one risk factor at a particular time (UNICEF, 2004). Poverty, social deprivation and economic disadvantage were cited as important in influencing the quality of child care standards in

families (Gil, cited in Parton, 1985). Given that an estimated 70% of South Africa's children live in poverty (Giese, 2001), poverty has been cited as an important explanation for child sexual abuse.

According to Townsend and Dawes (2004), the strains put on the family and the community by poverty, increases children's vulnerability to child sexual abuse. Poverty as an explanation for child sexual abuse has been reported by researchers to co-occur with other factors. Therefore, Klest (2012) suggested that a child raised under impoverished circumstances whilst exposed to childhood abuse and neglect, may have negative outcomes later in life as an adult implying that these circumstances strengthen the link between childhood adversities and disadvantaged adult life for people living in poor communities. There are suggestions that the poor socioeconomic circumstances in South Africa may have decreased most children's future educational achievement and "occupation status" and by so doing further increased their vulnerability to abuse (Townsend and Dawes, 2004, p. 67).

Zielinski (2009) also reported that in the USA childhood abuse was highly linked to one's economic standing later in life, that is, it was highly likely for a person who suffered childhood abuse to be unemployed and live in poverty in adulthood. Other connections between poverty and childhood abuse relate to the difficulties that poverty brings in a family leading to parental substance abuse, family disorganisation, domestic violence, stress and ultimately child abuse (Martsolf, Draucker, 2008). Other researchers claim that poverty-related risk factors allow child neglect to happen, resulting in negative outcomes for children especially when poverty is not only in the family but in the community as well (Nikulina, Widom and Czaja, 2011).

In South Africa poverty as an explanation is supported by reports that insist that the ills of apartheid have left South Africa impoverished with high unemployment rates, marginalisation of men, young and old, which have contributed to a culture of violence (Bornman et al., 1998; Dawes and Donald, 1994) gangsterism (Jewkes, 2012; Vogelman and Lewis, 1993) and no support system from the extended family for stressed mothers (Lalor, 2004). Similarly others (Kleijn, 2010; Wood, Welman and Netto, 2000) found that most of their participants grew up in dysfunctional poor families in which childhood abuse was common. Participants in these studies were reported to have been mostly unemployed at the time of their arrest.

South African studies found that those who are more privileged use this economic advantage to exploit women and children (Jewkes, 2012, Jewkes, Sikweyiya, et al 2011), using money for transactional sex with women, or to lure children into sexual acts and then justify sexual violence by claiming sexual entitlement (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Wojcicki, 2002).

Explanations suggesting the maintenance of male domination through the use of economic power have highlighted that women's socioeconomic status may determine to some extent how they would be affected by sexual violence (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell, Dunkle, 2011; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Yodanis, 2004; Wojcicki, 2002). Petersen et al. (2005) suggested that some women obey men because there are financial gains, mostly because men are mostly breadwinners in families. Furthermore, Wood, Maforah and Jewkes (1996) argued that the tolerance of violence has also impacted negatively on adolescent girls' perception of sexual violence. These authors' findings illustrate that when the use of violence is legitimated, women who are socially and economically disenfranchised say that they learnt to tolerate male dominance and sexual violence and to perceive it as love when they often receive gifts and money from their abusive partners.

This view explains how poor socioeconomic circumstances create power imbalances which reduces women's choices or makes them face harsh choices between material comfort and relationship comfort/abuse prevention (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that in certain circumstances men would use their economically powerful positions as providers to dominate women and legitimize entitlement to sex (Jewkes, Morrell, Sikweyiya, Dunkle, Penn-Kekana, 2012).

Under circumstances of socioeconomic disadvantage during which male control over women is weakened and legal means for sex with adult women fail due to poverty related conflict and stress, some of the men would not deem it inappropriate to replace an adult woman with a child for sex. Other options for sex are available for both economically advantaged and disadvantaged men. However, one of the "structural peculiarities of poverty" in South Africa is that it creates conditions under which "child sex may be" perceived by some men as "the only means by which to survive" (Townsend and Dawes, 2004, p. 74). Poverty also predisposes children to abuse. Perpetrators have reported luring children by offering money, food, Simba chips (potato crisps) or sweets (Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004) taking advantage of children's poor family backgrounds.

Although child sexual abuse happens across all socioeconomic classes, researchers have reported that children living in poverty may be more at risk of being sexually abused. Children who are often left unsupervised by working carers (Townsend and Dawes, 2004), are more at risk for grooming with food for sexually abusive acts with adults (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Wojcicki, 2002). Perpetrators have been reported to exercise patience during the grooming process to ensure child compliance to abuse. These strategies, illustrate planning involved though often denied by most perpetrators (Olson et al., 2007; Craven et al., 2006; Sanderson, 2006; McAlinden, 2006; Smallbone and Wortley, 2000; Elliot, Browne and Kilcoyne, 1995). While there are currently no studies

in South Africa which have addressed issues of grooming of very young children for sexually abusive acts with adults, findings by Kleijn (2010) concluded that perpetrators' acts of abuse in her sample were impulsive with no grooming. Similarly, Earl-Taylor's (2002) analysis of two child sexual abuse cases which were publicized in the media suggest that perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa do not usually plan the abuse as it is often opportunistic taking advantage of available and unsupervised young children. These researchers argue that it is situation specific, and it is usually an impulsive once off act of abuse resulting in significant physical harm. Therefore, due to the nature of the studies, these explanations are not able to adequately provide relevant data for poverty as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children. I argue that although using poverty as an explanation is not an adequately supported, it is a complex contributing factor for the perpetration of child sexual abuse especially to victim vulnerability (Townsend and Dawes, 2004).

2.2.4 Patriarchy and gender inequality

The high rates of child sexual abuse in South Africa are attributed to, amongst other explanations, the patriarchal nature of society which legitimizes gender inequality (Lalor, 2004; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996). Feminists in South Africa (Abrahams, 2004; Levett, 2003) and internationally (Okumu, 2004; Brownmiller, 1975) have argued that the problem of sexual violence is gender based, that is, it has its roots in the patriarchal ideology. In a patriarchal ideology men are positioned as "being in charge of women because they are perceived to be psychologically mature and sexually sophisticated" (Polaschek and Gannon, 2004, p. 301). Underlying patriarchy are "gender-stereotyping false beliefs" (Boakye, 2009) which deny, excuse or justify sexual violence against women and children (Cromer and Goldsmith, 2010).

Although postmodern feminists argue that power is relational and not fixed as both males and females could assume a position of perpetrator or a victim of rape (Ward, Polaschek and Beech, 2006), research findings in South Africa suggest that the majority of perpetrators are males and the majority of victims are females (Jewkes, 2012; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005). These explanations suggests that patriarchy creates conditions for abuse through the process of socialization which takes place in the home, at school, at work and other social settings, ensuring the cultivation and perpetuation of gender stereotypes which promote male domination and women subordination (Richter and Dawes, 2008). Similarly, feminists argue that in a patriarchal society, the family socialises boys to devalue women and perceive them as inferior and not to see violence as inappropriate and at the same time encourage insubordination in girls (Satter, 2003). Furthermore, the arguments support assertions by radical feminists that the goal of most men is to dominate and control women and children and that sex is used as a tool to punish women (Brownmiller, 1975).

Research on men suggest that male informants' explanations legitimize patriarchy by justifying gender-based inequalities to uphold a position of male domination and subjugation of women with claims that women are inferior and incapable of being socially and economically responsible (Murnen, Wright and Kaluzny, 2002). Furthermore other explanations suggest that some men perceive their control to be good for women (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012).

Feminists have also argued that socialization is at the centre of maintaining patriarchy and male domination. Parallel to socialization of boys into masculine roles, female socialization process encourages 'obedience and dependence' in women and children which fosters silence thus maintaining the sexual violence (Richter and Dawes (2008). Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junius (2005, p. 1813), have also reported that in South

Africa and Namibia girls are socialized, through cultural messages which emphasise a gendered and age related respect in social relations, to be subordinate to men and to take responsibility for how men treat them. This may be achieved by:

“the prohibitions against acts and reactions which can be viewed as disrespectful of the age based authority system which forms a powerful part of the traditional African social framework in South Africa” (Levett, 2003, p. 59).

Meursing et al. (1995) had similar findings in Zimbabwe. This positioning of males as superior and females as subservient is further reinforced by violence in the home. For example, one participant, in one study involving 1394 working men 40% of whom reported being physically and sexually violent to their partners, stated that:

“I do not believe in democracy in the home. That is something up there in the government - not in the house” (Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubscher, 1999, p. 23).

This line of thinking is explained by Moffett (2006, p. 142) who states that South African women, black and white, are often:

“reminded that their equality in the public domain does not translate into equality in the private domain, an arena that remains highly stratified and hierarchically structured”.

These messages illustrate how some men justify “sexual objectification of women and girls” (Levett, 2003, p. 59), sexual violence with gender inequitable ideas "about women as male property, but also a set of contradictory ideas about women's sexuality” (Gavey, 2005, p. 19). It is suggested that the assertions that women and children are ‘male possessions’ (Gavey, 2005, p. 20) give men some sense of entitlement to mainly sex which is acted upon once the man believes he is deprived of access to sex from his wife or

partner. Put in this way, sexual violence objectifies and dehumanizes women and children making obvious that women and children are taken to be male possessions and “objects for use and abuse” which do not have a right to say “no” (Vogelman and Lewis, 1993).

During apartheid sexual violence was “marginalised and minimised” (Posel, 2005a, p. 241 - 242).as the state institutions were disinterested in worsening problems of sexual violence within black communities and the police were inclined not to act on reports when complainants were black. The very reason that it was widespread was the reason for the problem to be ignored. Furthermore,

“within these political and legislative strictures, sex within the domestic domain was deemed a 'private matter' - with no sense of the contradiction entailed. So, sexual violence (particularly within 'the home') was typically not a site of political concern, unless the perpetrator was black and the victim white, in which case the public outrage was virulent” (Posel, 2005b, p. 128).

‘Private rape’, in the family, was not acknowledged especially if a man paid 'lobola' (bride price) because that meant the couple had a contract which gave the man entitlement to sex and power. If a woman was to expose him for rape, she was seen to be threatening the contract and material benefits she is gaining from the union (Posel, 2005a; Jackson, 2000). The contract was therefore maintained by silence.

The tolerance for sexual violence in South Africa is reportedly perpetuated by narratives that legitimize patriarchy justifying the importance of male domination and subordination of women (Moffett, 2006; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999). According to research findings (Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996, p. 3) from a study with adolescent Xhosa girls, some men use violence to dictate terms of sexual relations “through the circulation of certain constructions of love, intercourse and entitlement” such as “sex was the 'purpose' of

being 'in love', that people 'in love' must have sex 'as often as possible', and that sexual intercourse was 'what grown-ups do', to which the women were expected to submit".

Similarly, Jewkes et al.'s (2005, p. 1814) study in South Africa found that:

"The idea of uncontrollable desire operated more pervasively as a discursive device" which some men "used to explain some rape as 'biological' rather than 'sociological', and thus absolve guilt. In this respect, it was useful to men and further entrenched their dominance".

Furthermore, the feminist perspective argues that:

"men are not hard-wired to behave abusively towards women but through wider ideological influences and socialisation processes, they come to believe that they have the right to be sexually and emotionally sustained by females" (Townsend and Dawes, 2004, p. 64).

Contrary to these biological explanations, other scholars argue that the main reason why boys turn out to be sexually violent is because of the problem of gender inequality which is modelled in families and society at large. The everyday talk about men's inability to control themselves whilst aroused absolves them from taking responsibility for their actions. It instead diverts the blame to the victim because her manner of dress is supposed to have caused the arousal (Jewkes et al., 2005). Vogelman (1990) argued that men's desire for superiority enacted through sexual violence is not biologically determined. He added that controlling and domineering behaviour is learnt from family modes of relating, the media, sexist sexual institutions and activities, and society's glorification of "strong-armed masculinity and docile femininity" (Vogelman, 1990, p. 130). Feminist researchers

(Gavey, 2005; Abrahams, 2004; Okumu, 2004; Herman, 1990; Brownmiller, 1975) have identified socialization as fundamental in cultivating inequitable gender stereotypes that legitimize sexual violence. They suggest that growing up in an environment where violence is endemic, openly legitimated through messages that are set up to normalise it, suggests that it is acceptable and therefore not problematic to engage in acts that portray hostility towards women.

At the centre of patriarchy is the notion that male domination of women's sexuality is legitimate (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999). The idea that men are sexually entitled to sex from women as and when they want it emerges as a powerful explanation for sexual violence against women and children (Jewkes, 2012; Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011; Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin, Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006). Similar ideas were found elsewhere in the world (Pemberton and Wakeling, 2009; Polaschek and Gannon, 2004; Ward and Keenan, 1999; Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott, 1994).

The ideas of men's sense of entitlement to sex and the culture of violence that perpetuates them has reportedly remained an unchallenged everyday discourse by both men and women and as a result was reported to have become normative (Wojcicki, 2002; Wood and Jewkes 1998; Vogelmann and Lewis 1993; Vogelmann and Eagle, 1991). In addition, there are suggestions that the ideology of patriarchy legitimizes infidelity in favour of men (Scheinkman, 2005). Although some women have been reported to challenge these practices including male domination, others do not. Jewkes and Morrell (2012, p. 1734) reported, in a South African study which explored ways young women construct their femininities and agency, that they found "no evidence of women challenging patriarchy". What they found:

“instead was that women saw male control as legitimate and reflective of natural order” (Jewkes and Morrell, 2012, p. 1734).

Similarly, there are suggestions that some of the men who do not marry more than one wife, would exercise their control over women by having “a very large number of sexual partners” choosing to engage in impersonal sex “rather than a desire to emotionally engage” (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011, p. 9). This aspect illustrates the importance some men place on being in control of women and that extreme forms of hostility may be used towards women to achieve this control. Most of the men in Kleijn’s (2010) study reported being subjected to abuse by their mothers, uncles and other relatives. Whilst this illustrates that inappropriate behaviour is not only perpetrated or modelled by males, Kleijn’s findings also offer an explanation of why some perpetrators often have hostile attitudes towards women and children. I argue that sexual violence is used by some men against women and children to prove their ‘superiority’ to themselves and to others by punishing those who challenge it.

Similarly, Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes and Acker’s (1995) confluence model, which in my view examines some of the issues similar to those addressed by feminist explanations, suggest that men who are threatened by women whom they perceive to be more powerful than themselves are often hostile towards women, view them as distrustful and would strive to achieve a position of dominance and control over women which could include sexual and nonsexual manipulation and aggression. These researchers found that hostile masculinity and impersonal sex were significant factors in explaining sexual violence against women. Furthermore, Malamuth et al (1995, p. 367) suggested that the “impersonal orientation to sex enables a dismissal of concerns about the partner’s choice and feelings and sets a stage for the possibility of coercive sex” and preoccupation with assertion of masculinity.

The sense of hostility to powerful women has been reported in South Africa in relation to the introduction of legislation which protects women's rights and not necessarily linked to abuse by mothers but women's self-determination about their sexual rights. The democratisation of South Africa in 1994 saw the development of a new constitution which redefined the status of women, legitimising their central and equal role in society. This process has reportedly, "posed serious challenges to orthodox, mainly authoritarian notions of masculinity, leaving many men with a sense of irrelevance in the domestic sphere" (Wood et al., 2008, p. 47). Scholars (Moffett, 2006, p. 136; Posel, 2005a, p. 240) referred to this as "a crisis of masculinity". To this Posel (2005b, p. 137) stated that:

"More complex - rimmed with anger, pain and uncertainty - are the reactions from a range of men to the constitutional provisions for gender and sexual equality, who feel their masculinity under threat".

In an attempt to reclaim their power and authority, some men were reported to resort to violence (Wood et al., 2008) against women and children to maintain the gender hierarchy which is so deeply ingrained that it is taken for granted.

It can be argued that, though not the only explanation, the ideology of patriarchy in South Africa justifies sexual violence (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011; Lalor, 2004). It does so by normalising explanations that justify the apparent uncontrollability of male sexual urges. The societal structure upholds the principles of a democratic constitution whilst at the same time promoting customary law which protects patriarchal practices that position women as minors (Levett, 2003). Together these practices perpetuate failure or disinterest to challenge a culture of violence against women and children despite the existing rights based legislation (Richter and Dawes, 2008). Other

researchers (Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman and Laubsher, 2004, p. 330) had similar findings. These researchers conducted a study on the prevalence of sexual violence in three Cape Town municipalities, with a sample of 1368 men. They found that:

“while having frequent conflict with partners was important for the risk of sexual violence, only two types of conflict sources were significantly associated with this risk, namely conflict over sexual refusal and conflict when men perceived their authority to be undermined” (Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman and Laubsher, 2004, p. 330).

They concluded that:

“sexual violence was also associated with having more than one current partner, alcohol abuse and verbally abusing a partner, stemming from ideas of male sexual entitlement and dominance”.

In South Africa and internationally, it has been reported that, where deemed necessary by some men, sexual violence is often used as an instrument for exerting power and control over women and children (Abrahams, 2004; Okumu, 2004; Brownmiller, 1975). What becomes problematic is that the privileging of men as fathers under patriarchy which is characterised by the degradation and objectification of women brings about confusion. Therefore, Hearn and Pringle (2006, p. 382) concluded that there is a:

“marked persistence of men’s social power and privilege including in status terms as fathers”.

When men are privileged they reduce women to minors giving them the status of a child and under such conditions it becomes unproblematic to give the children a status of a woman (Levett, 2003). Within this context “the rule of the father” is perpetuated even in sexual terms through child sexual abuse (Levett, 2003, p. 57). It is therefore not surprising

for some men to use sexual abuse of young children to exercise their power including revenge over women and others (Kleijn, 2010).

Explanations for sexual violence suggest that the changes in the South African context dating back to colonisation, apartheid and emancipation of women by the democratic government have impacted negatively on male domination and access to sex (Lalor, 2004). These changes have been reported to have created a crisis of masculinity in power relations, production relations and sexual desire (Connell, 1995). Although sexual violence is not limited to Black South Africans, scholars have documented that the loss of socio-economic and political power, during colonisation and apartheid, brought with it oppression and marginalisation of Black people (Wojcicki, 2002; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993) who are the majority in the South African population. These experiences reportedly, had a greater impact particularly on black men. Failure in the economic sphere, which is central to men's identity as breadwinners within the patriarchal order, was reported to have emasculated men and undermined their traditional gender roles (Moffett, 2006; Posel, 2005a; Silberschmidt, 2001; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993). Under such circumstances some men resorted to the use of sexual violence, to evaluate their success and reassert their masculinity. It is argued that when men were frustrated by being publicly emasculated in the economic sphere, women and children became accessible targets for domination through sexual violence (Moffett, 2006; Richter, 2003; Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993).

The narratives of the young Xhosa girls (Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996) referred to earlier, illustrate the subjugation of women and girls and further illustrate assertions that sexual violence is condoned and tolerated by society. Explanations for failure to challenge sexual violence in South Africa are blamed on the long history of tolerance of violence, due in part to structural violence perpetrated by the apartheid government which made it a

way of life (Moffett, 2006; Wojcicki, 2002; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; Shaik and Park, 1998; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993; Mokwena, 1991; Campbell, 1992; Simpson, 1992; Guy, 1987). What these explanations illustrate is that everyday language is used to justify sexual violence. The following extract from one South African study illustrates this point:

“One woman explained that teenagers in short skirts were deliberately taunting men, which would explain their rape, if it occurred: ‘teenagers think if they are wearing short skirts they are abusing men, they are challenging men, because they say if you wear a short skirt you want to be raped, they [men] are threatened’. An older South African man seemed to agree with this and complained of flirting teenage girls wearing hipsters and G strings, ‘I feel they don’t respect us’” (Jewkes et al., 2005, p. 1814)

As a result, these explanations “have become so widespread that they actually function as social norms” (Stermac and Dafoe, 2009, p. 11). Therefore, it is important, for purposes of this study, to examine explanations that illustrate the use of narratives that justify sexual violence.

The following example from South Africa illustrates the extent to which gender inequitable views are still prevalent in the post-apartheid era, and continue to be used as discursive devices in male dominated institutions in South Africa in the denial of sexual violence against women and children. In 2011 President Jacob Zuma appointed a new Chief justice, Mogoeng Mogoeng, whose record as an appeal court judge was reported to be a concern as he previously passed judgements that suggests he upheld practices which promote gender inequality. For example:

“In one appeal, heard in the Bophuthatswana High Court ...in Mafikeng in 2007, Mogoeng suspended a convicted rapist’s two-year jail sentence on the grounds that he had been “aroused” by his wife and had used “minimum force”. The judgment reads: “This is a man whose wife joined him in bed, clad in panties and a nightdress. When life was still normal between them, they would ordinarily have made love. The appellant must, therefore, have been sexually aroused when his wife entered the blankets. The desire to make love to his wife must have overwhelmed him, hence his somewhat violent behaviour. He, however, neither smacked, punched nor kicked her. Minimum force, so to speak, was resorted to in order to subdue the complainant’s resistance.”(Rawoot, 2011).

Explanations by the judge illustrate dominant explanations that prevail and are used to perpetuate official denial of sexual violence (Kleijn, 2010; Lord and Willmot, 1999; O’Donohue and Letourneau, 1993) including claims for false accusations which position perpetrators as victims (Kleijn, 2010; Kennedy and Grubin, 1992; Salter, 1988). The comments illustrate tolerance and legitimization of sexual violence. Furthermore, they normalise sexual violence and use everyday constructions to promote justice for the perpetrator (Smart, 2000) as if it was unproblematic. It also illustrates a tendency to blame the victim for the abuse (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005). In such cases, if perpetrators acknowledged their behaviour were inappropriate they often minimized the harmful impact of the abuse to very young victims with statements such as “I’m not hurting that one” or “the child did not cry during the rape and as the child was not scared of me, she enjoyed it” (Kleijn, 2010, p. 243). Furthermore, some perpetrators have been reported to argue that “forced sex is not rape unless it is accompanied by physical violence” (Gavey, 2005, p 38).

Similarly, in Britain, “Sir Matthew Hale once said a woman gives up herself when she consents to marriage and therefore a man cannot be charged for raping his wife” (Hasday,

2000). This statement is now unacceptable in Britain because the law has changed in the UK. What is problematic is that although the law has also changed in South Africa, explanations suggest that patriarchal practices which promote injustices to women and children are tolerated raising questions about judge's understanding of democratic rights enshrined in the new South African Constitution and his view point on gender equality.

Other explanations by men (Gavey, 2005) have suggested that women are blamed for giving mixed messages as a 'no' may often mean a 'yes'. Although most studies have noted that blaming others is common and that women and mothers are blamed the most in cases of sexual violence (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Gavey, 2005; Wright and Schneider, 2004; Hooper, 1992), others (Stermac and Segal, 1989) have reported that abusers have a tendency to put more blame on children and less responsibility on themselves as adults. This illustrates the challenges in acknowledgement of sexually abusive acts. However, other researchers (Back and Lips, 1998; Meursing et al., 1995) pointed out that perpetrators often blame older children in their teenage years and not very young children. Similarly, perpetrators in Kleijn's (2010) study did not blame the young children they abused but offered explanations that illustrate externalisation of blame to mothers (Hooper, 1992), others and circumstances.

Some of the statements used for externalization of blame (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011) by perpetrators illustrate the denial of responsibility which is common for any offender. However, some of the perpetrators often deny the offence arguing that what they did was not inappropriate (Lund, 2000; Pollock and Hashmall, 1991) because the child was not harmed. When such assertions are supported by the judiciary with statements such as what happened took place within a relationship in which there was "mutual consent". (Supreme Court New Jersey Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct, 2002; p. 6), it further perpetuates externalisation of blame. I argue that although perpetrators of

sexual abuse know the rules about appropriate behaviour, they may not understand how the rules affect them.

Therefore, when caught, some perpetrators have been reported to claim to have lost control due to mostly addictive substances (Tolfrey, Fox and Jeffcote, 2011; Kleijn, 2010) often presenting explanations that illustrate shifting between denial of responsibility and acknowledgement (Happel and Auffrey, 1995). Although it is common for perpetrators to deny sexually abusing children (Happel and Auffrey, 1995; Kennedy and Grubin, 1992), research illustrate that when they admit they often justify their abusive behaviour claiming to have an urgency to have sex, positioning themselves as powerless from ‘a biologically driven uncontrollable sexual urge’ which demands instant gratification (Jewkes et al. 2013; Muchoki, 2011; Richter and Dawes, 2008; Akhilomen, 2006; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, Rose-Junius, 2005; Wojcicki, 2002; Wood, Maforah, and Jewkes, 1996; Meursing et al., 1995; Vogelmann and Eagle 1991). Externalisation of blame has been reportedly used by perpetrators to position themselves as victims (Schneider and Wright, 2004; Kenny and Grubin, 1992) for self-preservation purposes (Schneider and Wright, 2004).

Although perpetrators often deny the offence, denial of sexual abuse in the South African context illuminates deeply ingrained and publicly accepted “discursive devices” (Jewkes et al., 2005, p. 1814) that are used to excuse sexual violence (Rawoot, 2011). It also highlights similarities with the denial of sexual abuse as a social problem which has been extensively researched and documented in North America and Europe (Gavey, 2005; Supreme Court New Jersey Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct, 2002; Smart, 2000; Masson, 1985; Brownmiller, 1975). These explanations are used to justify sexual violence by blaming victims for wearing short or tight skirts, which men allege are acts of seduction or invitation for sex by women and children (Jewkes et al., 2005; Gavey, 2005; Back and

Lips, 1998), including very young children, who are alleged to later refuse to comply with sexual demands or cry foul after sex (Vogelman and Eagle, 1991).

It could be argued that in some cases, for example, decisions by the judiciary presented earlier as well as gender inequitable views reported in the media about how rape cases of prominent politicians were managed by the officials and the public (Pearce, 2006) perpetuate sexual violence due to the protection they seem to offer to perpetrators. The judgements suggest that the government system communicates tolerance for sexual violence by failing to use the legislation to punish perpetrators for transgressions. Furthermore, the tolerance by the judiciary supports feminist explanations suggesting that there is a pursuance by some men of an 'agenda to dominate and control women and children' (Brownmiller, 1975). Put in Connell's (1995, p. 82) words, "men gain a dividend from patriarchy in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command. They also gain a material dividend". It could be argued that denial of sexual violence is part of this agenda.

The maintenance of prestige and the right to command often requires the use of force. Researchers (Moffett, 2006; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993) have reported that in extreme cases, especially in the South African context, excessive and inhumane force in the form of gang rapes is often used by young men to maintain or reclaim their authority. Sexual violence is thus explained as an act of power and therefore those who believe they have been emasculated often used it to regain their power (Lalor, 2004; Vogelmann and Lewis, 1993) through disciplining or punishing women (Abrahams, 2004). According to Epstein (2006) "some rapists carry out the worst punishment of all. Rather than raping the women themselves, they rape the children of the women they wish to discipline". Although David Potse, ex-boyfriend to Baby Tshepang's mother, denied raping the nine month old baby in the Northern Cape in 2001, it is suspected that revenge could have been his reason for the rape. This assertion is supported by others (Kleijn, 2010; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-

Junius, 2005) whose findings have illustrated that some men rape young children to punish the children's significant others.

Although explanations offered have attempted to illustrate an association between patriarchy and gender inequitable views and sexual violence, these explanations have not adequately outlined how this happens. Whereas feminist explanations are important in understanding sexual abuse of young children, they also have shortcomings as some of them present power as if it is fixed and only belong to males. I argue that sexual violence in South Africa has its roots in the patriarchal nature of society which uses discursive devices to cultivate and perpetuate gender inequitable views that upholds a position of male dominance and female subordination to justify male sexual entitlement and sexual objectification of women and children.

2.2.5 Sexual interest in children

Our knowledge about sexual abuse of young children in South Africa is framed mostly from research conducted amongst victims, carers, community samples and professionals and less from the perpetrators themselves (Pryor, 1996). Although initiatives to address the gap for knowledge on this phenomenon, including profiling of perpetrators, have started, no study has been conducted in South Africa to understand how perpetrators make sense of sexual abuse of young children including their motivations for sexual interest in children. Therefore, literature reviewed on this aspect has included available relevant studies but relied more on international and historical studies to address the research question.

Although extensive research has been done in an attempt to find explanations for sexual abuse (Kleijn, 2010; Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996; Ward and Keenan, 1999; Polaschek and Gannon, 2004; Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott, 1994), there are a number of

different and contradictory explanations about why men perceive children as sexually attractive. What is problematic is that on the one hand there are more clinical explanations which pathologize and individualize child sexual abuse and very little sociological explanations on motives. On the other hand, feminists offer explanations at societal level suggesting that patriarchy and a desire for male domination is the reason for sexual violence (Brownmiller, 1975; Seymour, 1998). The view that sexual violence is a male problem is also debated. Although there is a paucity of research on African women's agency in sexual decision-making (Epprecht, 2009) there is evidence to support claims that women also perpetrate sexual abuse (Deering and Mellor, 2011) raising questions about motives under such circumstances.

Attempts to understand sexual attraction to young children focus mainly on two key arguments amongst many. The two key arguments are whether the perpetrator's intention is power acquisition (Sikweyiya and Jewkes, 2009; Gavey, 2005; Meursing et al., 1995; Malamuth and Briere, 1986; Brownmiller, 1975) or sexual gratification (Hartley, 2001; Scully and Marolla, 1985; Malamuth and Check, 1983; Prescott, 1975).

In explaining sexual gratification as a reason for sexual aggression, researchers (Prescott, 1975, p. 11; Malamuth and Check, 1983, p. 65) reported that they found that "a lack of somatosensory pleasurable experiences with the opposite sex contribute to the development of sexually aggressive tendencies". Prescott (1975, p. 11) offered the following explanation for this finding:

"I am convinced that various abnormal social and emotional behaviours resulting from what psychologists call deprivation, that is, a lack of tender, loving care, are caused by a unique type of sensory deprivation, somatosensory deprivation".

Similarly, other researchers (Finkelhor, 1984) suggested that sexual aggression is an attempt to satisfy the unmet non-sexual needs including those for affection and intimacy.

Other researchers suggest that loneliness draws some men to children. According to Lawson (2003, p. 698-700) perpetrators often “sexualise their perceived loneliness and isolation” and hope that their victims would rid them of loneliness. Making a choice to alleviate loneliness with a child highlights the power problem in sexual violence. Although some researchers suggest that perpetrators’ low self-esteem (Ward, McCormack and Hudson, 1997; Ward, Hudson and France, 1994) contribute to the problem, others (Horley et al. 1997) disagree suggesting that explanations are much more complex. Furthermore, Finkelhor and Araji (1986) argue that it is inconclusive.

The complexity of self-esteem issues emanate from divergent explanations. At one end there are suggestions that lower self-esteem is due to failed socialization as a result of poor parenting and exposure to childhood adversities (Lussier and Healey, 2010). At the other end explanations suggest that for unemployed men, being poor contributed to instability in intimate relationships and a lower self-esteem (Jewkes et al., 2013) due to socioeconomic disadvantage discussed earlier under poverty. For example, one participant in a South African study “explained that he ‘*get frustrated*’ when he was not able to ‘*provide adequately*’ for the family since he felt responsible for them as ‘*it is one of the things to be a man*’” (Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubscher, 1999, p. 23). It could be argued that those who believed they lost control of their masculinity would target defenceless children to meet their need for power and control and boost their self-esteem.

There are also claims that perpetrators’ sexual interest in children is also aimed at the need for dominance and control (Finkelhor, 1984). Finkelhor (1984) suggests that the sexual motive becomes more important when there is a need for power and control or need for

closeness. This explanation suggests that the perpetrator motive for sex with very young children could be to have easy access to affection by sexually abusing a child who is defenceless and not in a position to challenge his power and control. By abusing a child he avoids rejection from an adult woman, his sexual desire is met and this maintains his position of dominance.

Although most explanations suggest that both the need for dominance and control as well as the need for intimacy perpetuate sexual violence, most researchers and scholars argue that the motivation for sexual violence emanates from a desire for domination. There seems to be more support in the literature (Jewkes et al., 2005; Malamuth and Briere, 1986; Brownmiller, 1975) for feminist explanations which suggest that cultural attitudes and the need for acquisition of position of dominance, not sexual desire, are implicated in the perpetration of sexual abuse of young children (Burn and Brown, 2006, p. 229).

Wilson and Cox (1983) suggest that children are chosen because of their lack of understanding about sex. Similarly, there are suggestions that lack of language and vocabulary about sexuality (Davies and Rogers, 2009) and the culture of obedience and trust in adults (Levett, 2003; Meursing et al., 1995) makes children more vulnerable to sexual abuse as they will not be in a position to disclose details of the abuse. The naivety in children makes them a safe and more attractive target for perpetrators. It is therefore not surprising that they are perceived as more reliable, accepting and loving 'partners' than adults (Ward and Keenan, 1999). An adult who fails to initiate and maintain intimate relationships with his peers and decides to target very young children for abuse illustrates the desire for ultimate control which is not possible in a relationship with his peers.

What is evident in these explanations is that child sexual abuse is a complex problem. Although both the need for power and closeness were highlighted as motives elsewhere, it

is not clear whether such explanations apply within the South African context and if they do how very young children would be regarded, unproblematically, as 'sexual partners'. This illustrates that although research has been conducted elsewhere there is a need for research in South Africa to explore perpetrator explanations for their motives for sexual abuse of young children. Jewkes et al. (2005, p. 1818) suggest that in considering all explanations it is also important to take into consideration the gendered nature of the problem. I therefore argue that to understand this phenomenon, it is important to explore multiple explanations through eliciting diverse perpetrators' views about sexually abusive acts with young children in a way that allows diverse and deeper insights about their motives taking into consideration the South African socio-cultural context.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The review has shown that the phenomenon of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa is under researched. Secondary schools pupils and community samples consisted of both men and women. Few studies have focused on perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children. Most of the relevant work derived from interviews with perpetrators of young children was done internationally and this work has often been clinical examining biological and psychological explanations. The limited research studies on child sexual abuse in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kleijn, 2010; Lalor, 2004) suggest that more questions remain unanswered.

Further exploration of the literature has illustrated that five factors feature prominently in studies focusing on sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. Firstly, the review illustrates that although there are assertions that the virgin cleansing myth is motivating perpetrators to sexually abuse young children, there is no empirical evidence to support this view. The virgin cleansing myth explanation was not derived from studies on

perpetrators but from research findings based on a limited number of participants in community samples. It also illustrates that these views may have emerged from communities in an attempt to make sense of the high rates of sexual abuse of very young children. Although one study has noted that perpetrators denied being motivated by the myth, no study has explored how perpetrators make sense of the virgin myth as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children. Researchers supported the need for research pertaining to whether perpetrators know about the myth and whether they do act upon it (Jewkes, 2004).

Secondly, the review highlights that most research findings confirm that more girls than boys are abused. However, research also highlights that there are more male perpetrators and very few female perpetrators. These findings question the unquestioned assumptions of the cycle of abuse explanation which pathologizes childhood abuse victimhood by emphasizing the damaging effect of such experiences. Some researchers who use childhood abuse to predict future offending behaviour suggest that the impact of childhood adversities could be complicated by exposure to multiple victimizations and that it is important for research not to focus on one factor but to be open to other possible coexisting adversities within the social environment of the child. There are also suggestions that the impact of the abuse may depend on how the victims make sense of the abuse depending on the social context of the abuse. The lack of empirical evidence on this issue in South Africa necessitates research on how and whether perpetrators use their childhood abuse to make sense of their motivations to sexually abuse young children.

Thirdly, poverty was highlighted as a complicating factor that may, on its own but often coupled with other factors, be a risk factor for child sexual abuse. On the one hand poor mothers may engage in economic activities that force them to leave their children at home, unsupervised and at risk of abuse. On the other hand, researchers have suggested that when

a child grows up under poor circumstances he or she is likely to be poor later in life. There are suggestions that poor socioeconomic conditions in South Africa and the high rates of unemployment, may have contributed to the reported emasculation of some men who could not actively assume the role of provider. As a result of their poor socioeconomic status, they may have been unable to access sex from adult women. It is argued that under such conditions, children who are unsupervised or under the perpetrator's care, may become easy targets for sexual abuse. Most researchers have suggested that although poverty may contribute to abuse, it does not alone adequately explain child sexual abuse because this phenomenon occurs across all classes in societies. The review supports the need for more exploration of perpetrator explanations about the role of poverty in the sexual abuse of young children.

Fourthly, the patriarchal nature of the South African society was reported to be at the root of the high rates of sexual violence in the country. Researchers suggest that despite the democratisation of South Africa, the patriarchal ideology is perpetuated by the use of discursive devices that use cultural explanations to uphold gender inequitable views which promote the tolerance of sexual violence in society. Therefore abuse is often justified or denied. Where inappropriate behaviour is acknowledged, perpetrators often externalise blame including blaming victims for the abuse. More importantly, some men have declared they would not accept democracy in the home. Therefore, sexual abuse continues to be a privatised matter in the homes.

The literature has highlighted that those who draw on biological explanations that claim the uncontrollability of male sexual urge and that this suggests that women should be readily available to satisfy male sexual desire, are of the view that women's rights threaten male authority and 'unlimited' access to sex. Furthermore, this assumed barrier to sex and other male power privileges have been reported in the literature to create a crisis of

masculinity. The review suggested that under such circumstances some men would replace adult women with young children and not perceive such acts as inappropriate because under patriarchy a woman and a child have a similar status. They are both perceived to be inferior, a minor and a male possession which may be objectified and abused.

The fifth and last explanation offered in the review highlighted assertions that the loss of male power and control due to democratisation, low self-esteem, isolation and need for intimacy may motivate some men to sexually abuse young children to meet their needs.

The review has illustrated that there are multiple conflicting views about whether perpetrators are motivated by the need for intimacy or acquisition of power to sexually abuse young children. Although most community studies suggest the need for acquisition of power, this aspect has not been adequately explored with perpetrators within the South African context further suggesting the need for more research in this area.

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The belief that it was taboo to openly talk about sex (Gavey, 2005; Hunter, 2010; Ndinda et al, 2011), sensitivities about child sexual abuse as a subject, and the denial that it is a social problem present the phenomena as a challenging subject to study and define. There are multiple realities which bring about varied explanations about child sexual abuse influenced by cultural backgrounds which change over time depending on the contexts (Ndinda et al., 2011) and power dynamics between people. These power dynamics and contexts within which they occur determine what explanations, from a multiplicity of existing 'truths', would be upheld and acted upon. Therefore, researching incarcerated perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children adds to the challenges in studying this phenomenon. These complexities illustrate the inherent challenges in planning and studying a sensitive phenomenon, more so when little is known about it.

This chapter presents how this study was planned and executed. It provides the story about how the research process evolved from a community focused to a perpetrator focused study, highlighting changes in the research questions and aims. It explains researcher standpoint, the methodological approach for the study; the ethical review processes put in place to safeguard both the participants and the researcher; the recruitment process, data collection methods used during the study; data analysis process undertaken to interpret the findings; as well as how data is presented.

3.2. THE RESEARCH STORY

Although the study aimed at understanding how perpetrators made sense of sex with young children, it was acknowledged at the conception of the study that a focus on perpetrators may not be possible. This was mainly due to anticipated challenges in accessing incarcerated perpetrators as documented in previous research (Kleijn, 2010), personal communication with practitioners, lack of information due to the paucity of research in the area, and lack of reliable statistics indicating the population of incarcerated perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children. A decision to have diverse stakeholders was more pragmatic as it ensured that all options are kept open. Therefore, the initial aim of this research project was to examine community explanations about sexual abuse of young children in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The community stakeholders included professionals working in the field; focus groups; carers of young children who were sexually abused; and incarcerated perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children. Focus groups consisted of Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) volunteers operating under the Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD) who were based in police stations. These volunteers assisted officers working with victims of sexual and other violence related crimes at community level.

Various points of access, for these diverse groups, were required for the study. To achieve this I, together with the Open University (OU) supervision team, organised a workshop in South Africa which brought together institutions identified as potential access points for the study. The workshop was hosted in partnership with the Infant Trust, Childline Limpopo and the University of Limpopo (UL) in Polokwane in Limpopo Province in August 2008. This workshop played a major role in launching me as a bona fide researcher in the field to gatekeepers. It was therefore easy for gatekeepers, defined as people who have the knowledge about an area and or the power, to grant access to information or information sources (David and Sutton, 2004) because they already knew about the study. Following the

workshop, I gained entry into field work through Child Line Limpopo, Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD), Department of Correctional Services (DCS) national office, Department of Justice (DoJ)¹¹, Thohoyandou Victim Empowerment programme (TVEP) and the South African Police Service's¹² (SAPS) Family, Child and Sexual Offences Unit (FCS).

At the outset there were expectations that progressive focusing, through fieldwork, could occur in relation to issues about child sexual abuse. The flexibility in grounded theory, explained later in this chapter, means that the framework of the study evolves during the research, and therefore it was pragmatic to design broader and less specific research questions (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The initial research questions for this study were as follows:

1. How do perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with young children?
2. How do carers of victims make sense of sexual abuse of young children?
3. How does the community position itself in relation to sexual abuse of young children?

In order to address these questions, a specifically predetermined group of participants was selected at the beginning of fieldwork using non-probability purposive sampling. Purposive sampling, targeted “individuals with specific characteristics of typically predictive power” (McQueen and Knussen, 2006, p. 97) enabling the identification of relevant professionals needed as interviewees and informants for access to other research participants' groups. Sampling procedures differed from one department to another and from one Province to another within DCS which shall be dealt with later in this chapter when explaining access to key participants, perpetrators.

The fieldwork process commenced with informal interviews with gatekeepers, Provincial Heads in DHSD, followed by requests for access to and interviews with professionals and community informants. The professionals, focus groups and carer interview data significantly contributed in setting the scene at the beginning of the study and in the development of vignettes which were later used to facilitate interviews with perpetrators (see appendix 3 for details of study informants).

Despite the significant role community informants played in setting the scene for field work, initial analysis reflected that community narratives offered limited explanations about why perpetrators sexually abuse young children. Data saturation was reached earlier than expected during the research process in this group of participants mainly because they offered similar explanations with insufficient depth about sexual abuse of young children providing no new leads.

Key findings from these informants were as follows:

- i. The rate of child sexual abuse is very high in Limpopo.
- ii. Overcrowding and lack of privacy exposes children to adult sexual activities which later lead to sexual experimentation by young children resulting in sexual abuse perpetrated by very young offenders.
- iii. Absent parenting often perpetuated by migratory labour system leaves children with no supervision
- iv. Some of the fathers believe they are entitled to initiate their children into sexual acts, that is, “The father has to taste before the chickens can go out” (social worker)
- v. Most perpetrators of sexual abuse against infants are known to the child and family.
- vi. The perpetrator often pays damage money to the victim’s family to avoid prosecution and such practices are acceptable as satisfactory means of resolving the abuse due to lack of confidence in the police who either humiliate victims or encourage carers to treat the abuse incident as a family matter. Damage money was

reported to be welcome by mostly poor families who ended prioritizing family survival neglecting the abused child.

- vii. Some of the victim's family members would choose not to report the abuse and treat it as a private family matter to protect family honour, prevent family breakdown and or loss of financial security.
- viii. Children are regarded as easy targets for abuse as it is cheap to bribe them.
- ix. The belief in the virgin cleansing myth is motivating perpetrators to sexually abuse young children. However, there were contradictory views amongst both professionals and community informants regarding this view.
- x. There is something wrong with a person who sexually abuse young children as a normal person would not do such a thing.

When interviews with perpetrators commenced during phase two, it became evident that more leads were emerging from their narratives. The narratives provided important explanations about how perpetrators made sense of sex with young children, yielding more key categories. Some of the key emergent categories included gender inequitable views perpetrators held which they used to legitimate a belief in a sense of entitlement to sex, and denial of responsibility highlighting externalisation of blame to others. Of importance is that their narratives further offered explanations about their motivation for sexual acts with young children. Their narratives had more explanatory power in response to the research question, suggesting the need for theoretical sampling.

It became evident that more perpetrator interviews are essential. However, information from gatekeepers in Limpopo DCS and DHSD indicated that the targeted perpetrator population was small and only available in three prisons and a Secure Care facility for awaiting trial juveniles. Seven perpetrators were recruited and interviewed in these centres. At this stage of the study data saturation was not reached as new information was emerging from perpetrator

narratives. A repeat interview strategy for perpetrators was put in place and two repeat interviews were conducted with perpetrators for clarification on emerging explanations, testing and filling emerging categories, and validating emergent explanations.

On reflection I had recognised the limits of community explanations on the phenomenon. It also became clear at this stage of data collection and analysis that since more categories were emerging from perpetrator narratives, it was important to be theoretically sensitive to the emerging explanations. The successful access to DCS and their continued cooperation during fieldwork led to an agreement with the supervision team that I submit an application to DCS to request an extension of research sites moving focus from Limpopo to correctional centres in other Provinces (Gauteng, North West and Mpumalanga). The request was promptly approved and three perpetrators were accessed from North West Province and seventeen from Gauteng Province.

On the basis of the unanticipated opportunities for widening the geographical area of focus and access to more perpetrators, a decision was made to review and refine the research questions, move focus away from repeat interviews with perpetrators, interviews with professionals, carers, focus groups, and moving away from Limpopo Province as an area of focus for the study. This meant that the study moved from being a Provincial to a South African study. Although the sampling process included different categories of participants, the direction of the study informed a change regarding who the key participants of the study should be. Progressive focusing did not happen in relation to a particular issue about the child sexual abuse phenomenon but it occurred in relation to one particular stakeholder group – perpetrators. Therefore, data gathered from community groups has therefore not featured in the findings but where necessary, has been used to support findings from perpetrator narratives as key participants of this study.

The research question for the study is thus as follows:

How do perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with young children?

The study aims are:

To understand and analyze how perpetrators of child sexual abuse make sense of sex with young children.

To develop insights that would enable understanding of sexual abuse of young children.

3.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AS A WAY OF KNOWING

Before explaining methodological choices it is important to first explain my theoretical standpoint which influenced my decisions. The basis for the methodological choice lies within choices I made about how data will be collected, interpreted and understood. What was important for this study was to focus on real life experiences of participants and to unravel the multiple meanings or competing explanations they offered in their narratives about sex with young children and how these meanings changed over time within and between data sets. My aim was not the pursuance of the truth about why perpetrators sexually abused young children. I aligned myself with the view that realities are social constructions and therefore social constructionism seemed appropriate as a lens during the study.

According to Burr (1995), social constructionism is a theoretical orientation which offers radical and critical alternative to psychology and social psychology but, more importantly has been taken up widely in the social sciences. It is a way of studying social arrangements which are said to be fragile and in constant change with shifting and multiple meanings as was the case with narratives of participants in this study. It is also useful to note the difference between constructionism and constructivism as I used Charmaz's constructivist grounded

theory to position myself as a co-constructor of narratives that I present in this study in a sense that my position as a researcher, a black woman, influenced how my participants positioned themselves through their narratives. According to Crotty (2003, p. 58) constructivism “focuses exclusively on ‘the meaning-making activity of the individual mind’” in relation to each individual’s “unique experiences”. On the other hand constructionism focuses on “‘the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning’” (Crotty, 2003, p. 58) with language as pivotal in meaning-making (Burr, 1995). Constructionism emphasizes the key role culture plays in influencing how we make sense of the world and that we should be critical of this sense making as well. Therefore social constructionism suggests the importance of awareness of historical and cross-cultural comparisons and that “at different times and in different places, there have been and are very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena” (Crotty, 2003, p. 64), as has been evidenced in the varied explanations offered on child sexual abuse in the previous chapter. It also points out that meaning is never fixed, as it changes over time from context to context and from person to person and that it is contestable (Burr, 1995).

Social constructionism warns against adopting particular standpoints or ‘cultural imperialism’ by taking as truths dominant western explanations of child sexual abuse already mentioned in chapter 2 (Levett, 2004). It encourages one to be tentative in one’s understanding and less dogmatic, to see these explanations to be influenced by historical and cultural interpretations rather than as universal and unchanging “truths” (Crotty, 2003, p. 64).

Of relevance to this study is that social constructionism does not view sexuality as natural, permanent and unchanging in a way that favours men’s desire. Using social constructionism as a way of knowing helped me understand and analyse explanations and how they were produced (Hollway, 1989). Social constructionism views sexuality as a product of regulation and control processes (Saraga, 2007) which, as explained in chapter two, favours men’s

needs as all these are just ideas that have been socially constructed and institutionalised probably by some men in positions of power which allow them to dominate and privilege their ideas in order to maintain male privilege. Using social constructionism helped me understand subjectivities involved in the production and reproduction of gender differences, power relations, gender differentiated positions (Hollway, 1989). Therefore using the social constructionist lens in this study allows the researcher to explore the less explored narratives about sexual abuse of young children by perpetrators themselves. Doing so has uncovered different 'truths' on this phenomena and as shall be shown in the data chapters these narratives opened broader discussions to challenge prevailing dominant explanations about sexual abuse of young children in South Africa.

3.4 METHODOLOGY

The anticipated challenges inherent in uncertainties about researching a sensitive topic (Hays et al., 2003) reduced confidence in predicting some elements of the research process. I therefore had to consider a methodology that would not put constraints in the process but would instead permit a change of direction if necessary. Grounded theory informed approach was therefore considered as a methodology which allows flexibility and would be more suitable for possible changes in an exploratory study.

3.4.1 Grounded theory informed approach as a methodology for the study

Essential elements which made grounded theory informed approach an appropriate methodology for the study were its openness and adaptability. These elements became important in allowing the necessary modifications inherent in data collection in different research contexts, with informants from diverse backgrounds in different correctional centres

as dictated by the theoretical sampling¹³ process. Therefore, grounded theory informed approach was chosen for its flexibility (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The flexibility within this methodology made it a suitable choice for a study where little is known about the phenomenon such as sexual abuse of young children in South Africa.

Grounded theory informed approach's flexibility allows "openness to empirical leads" which "spurs the researcher to pursue emergent questions and thus shifts the direction of inquiry" (Charmaz, 2005, p. 512). Locke (2001, p. 95) adds that grounded theory "adapts well to capturing the complexities of the context in which the action unfolds". Grounded theory informed approach further enabled focus on life experiences using an interpretive approach to unravel meanings in participants' explanations about sexual abuse of young children.

Following is a background on grounded theory, its definition, an overview of the different variants of grounded theory, and the choice I made about which variant of grounded theory to use for this study.

Grounded theory emerged in the 1960's after debates in the human sciences regarding the merits of qualitative and quantitative research methods. It was developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. These authors argued against the importance of hypothesis testing in research and for theory that is developed by an iterative process from qualitative data gathered from real social settings. Its roots are also traceable to Blumer's symbolic interactionism¹⁴ (Richards, 1996).

¹³ Theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to develop emerging theory. It is the grounded theory strategy to obtain further selective data to refine and fill out major categories until no new properties emerge. (Charmaz, 2006, p. 96)

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that focuses on human experience. It is a theory which focuses on the social aspect of human life in terms of how people act, interact, derive meanings and interpret meaning of things. Within these social interactions with other humans, human being derive meanings of things and use these meanings or modify them through interpretations to understand their world and act on it (Blumer, 1969 cited in Richards, 1996). According to Blumer (1969 cited in Richards, 1996) there are two forms of social interactions. They include "conversation of gestures" and the "use of significant symbols". Language plays a significant role as a sociocultural symbol (Burr, 1995).

According to Charmaz (2005, p. 507), “grounded theory may be used as a method and a product of inquiry. Essentially, grounded theory methods are a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development”. Middle range theories are made up of concepts, grounded in data, which explain the reality of a social phenomenon (Smith and Liehr, 2008; Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory is concerned with discovery of theory rather than verification but the discovery should lead to a deeper understanding of the investigation providing explanation about phenomenon under study (Charmaz, 2005). Data collected during research is used for analysis and to plan further data collection. Due to its unpredictable characteristics, grounded theory is “a messy intriguing kind of research in which conclusions are only known when data collection and analysis is completed (Gherardi and Turner cited in Willig and Stainton-Rogers, 2008, p. 248). It is useful in studying local interactions and meanings in particular social contexts. Its strength is that it provides an explanation of what is actually happening in real life instead of describing what should happen (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

I found that the most commonly used variants of grounded theory approaches are Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) emerging design, Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) systematic design, Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist approach and Clarke’s (2005) situational analysis. In terms of making a choice between the various grounded theory methodologies, a combination of classical grounded theory and the constructivist grounded theory by Charmaz was deemed appropriate for the study.

I chose to use Glaser and Strauss’s (1967) grounded theory even though I do not adopt their objectivist stance to knowledge and the idea that the researcher goes to the field untainted by

knowledge about the phenomenon. Instead I noted that these authors see grounded theory as a flexible guideline which researchers could use in a way that suits different contexts to achieve their research aims. Furthermore, the choice for Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory informed approach is pragmatic in a sense that it has less complex coding system; does not require a hypothesis prior to fieldwork; is useful in exploratory studies where little is known about the phenomenon; it allows flexibility to pursue leads emerging from the data; emphasises trust in emergence and being theoretically sensitive to what the data is revealing to guide further theoretical sampling by emphasising empirical connectedness as the emerging data is used to guide the direction of the study through constant comparison.

On the other hand, Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach permits the researcher to reconstruct data into a theory that they themselves must own and concurrently grounding it by drawing on active and where possible "*in vivo*"¹⁵ codes (Charmaz 2006). By using in vivo codes this approach ensures a balanced visibility of participants' narratives in the analysis to highlight their connections to the findings. I chose to stay closer to participants' data in line with constructivist grounded theory's way of conducting data analysis as opposed to axial coding by Strauss and Corbin. Glaser emphasizes the importance of trusting the categories to emerge from the data and believed that Strauss and Corbin's coding procedures tend to force the categories to emerge (Kelle, 2007). Glaser (1992) further suggested that Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory procedures are too prescriptive and structured.

Furthermore, constructivist grounded theory rejects objectivist notion inherent in Glaser and Strauss's grounded theory emphasising the role of the researcher as a co-constructor and author of the narratives and their multiple meanings, an aspect which is relevant to social constructionism. Using constructivist grounded theory made conducting the study practical

¹⁵ In vivo codes refer to participants' special terms (Charmaz, 2006, p.55).

as it encourages the researcher to be open-minded during data collection and analysis “as opposed to uncovering an emergent truth” as is the case with traditional grounded theory (Mills, 2007, p. 74). The next section looks at assumptions underlying the use of grounded theory informed approach.

3.4.2 Assumptions about the use of Grounded theory informed approach in this study

Taking into consideration the paucity of research on this phenomenon, based on McCallin’s (2003) assumptions about grounded theory, I made the following assumptions about how grounded theory informed approach would be used to plan and implement this study:

Grounded theory informed approach would enable the generation of new concepts and theories (McCallin, 2003).

Data gathered would represent participants’ real everyday life situations

The need for continuous theoretical sampling and concurrent data collection and analysis requires the researcher to create space for reflection on emergent concepts during field work.

Key research participants cannot be identified entirely at the beginning of the research project, as was the case in this study, because the need for particular participants would be determined as the process continues. Participants were identified using theoretical sampling which was determined during concurrent data collection and analysis wherein categories requiring further exploration were identified.

According to Richardson (1996), theoretical sampling is one of the two fundamental analytical commitments that shape the methodological stance adopted by Glaser and Strauss. Theoretical sampling involves selecting informants and settings so that the developing concepts and theories are elaborated to as full an extent as possible (Thyer, 2001). The second commitment is the method of constant comparison which defines the principal

analytical task as one of continually sifting and comparing elements throughout the lifetime of the research project (Richardson, 1996). The next section will present practicalities involved in preparing for fieldwork for this study highlighting processes involved in ensuring the study followed the set requirements in researching people's real life situations.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.5.1 Application for access

The British Sociological Association's (BSA) Statement of Ethical Practice (2002) served as a guideline during the study. Some of the basic principles and values used in the implementation of the research included professional integrity, ensuring anonymity, privacy and confidentiality as well as making necessary arrangements to get approval from all relevant bodies. Due to the sensitive nature of the study and the fact that the study was to be conducted internationally in South Africa, the application process was complex, addressing issues of both participants and researcher safety. Recommended revisions suggested by the ethics committee were incorporated and ethical approval for the study was granted by The Open University Human Participants and Materials Ethics Committee.

The OU approval was followed by two applications to key institutions, that is, DHSD and DCS in South Africa where prospective participants were to be recruited. The two departments had different research ethics application procedures and different timelines for submission. The applications were submitted in December 2008 and a decision was made in January to allow access to research sites. Letters were issued by both departments and I was instructed to produce the letter at all times when making contact with officials for research purposes. I made copies of the letter and kept the original copy at a safe place.

Despite a short turnaround period for my access application, the committee had one query about the application. The DCS research ethics committee wanted to know how the participants, perpetrators of child sexual abuse, would be identified in prisons. This question seemed simple at that time and my clarification that participants could be identified through personal records which should indicate the ages of victims was accepted. However, identification emerged to be more problematic because much as it is expected that participants could be identified through the checking of the age of the sex offender's victim in their files, records were not made available to correctional centres when inmates were brought to the centres after sentencing. There was therefore a continuous struggle to identify participants because SAP 69, a form detailing the offence and information about the victim, was in most cases never brought to the centres no matter how insistent DCS officials were in requesting it from the police.

3.5.2 Participants' wellbeing

Due to the sensitivity of this topic, I expected that reliving historically adverse experiences during interviews might bring about discomfort in participants. I therefore identified a database of available resources which participants could access to assist with personal issues that the interview could have raised. Service providers were requested in advance to be available to offer services if needed.

I listened to participants with empathy and supported the mobilisation of resources for needs as and when they emerged. One particular case that needed attention was that of a 19yr old young offender who was arrested aged 15 for sexually abusing an eighteen months old baby girl. He was finding it difficult to cope with his offence and disclosed during the interview that he still had nightmares and fears reoffending once released. He was due for release in a few months and he claimed not receiving adequate support from the

correctional centre to deal with his fears and guilt. I discussed his case with my supervisors as I strongly felt there was a need to raise the issue with the department because he would be released into the community whilst he was still vulnerable. It was agreed that a second interview, aimed at getting his consent to inform the department about his needs, would be useful. I arranged a meeting with him and he consented to me informing the social worker about his need for counselling and for asking for forgiveness from the victim's parents. This process did not include disclosing details of the interview with the social worker. There were occasions where inmates would request for help in dealing with other issues and in those cases the researcher explained the need for them to communicate with the correctional centre social worker.

3.5.3 Researcher wellbeing

The sensitivity of the topic meant there were increased risks during field work. To ensure safety, precautionary measures in line with OU Health and Safety policy, including risk assessment were done prior to each interview session. The dynamics and uniqueness of each research site meant I could never be fully prepared for what I went through. According to the policies of the DCS, a researcher is supposed to have an official watching her during interviews with inmates. This was not always the case. Some centres had interview rooms with windows where I could see the official and he would see me during the interview. Others did not have windows and that meant I was often alone with the inmate in an office and unmonitored. The social worker would tell me where he or she was in case I needed to make contact. In some instances I would be given someone to watch me and during the interview I would look up to see if they are still there and see no one. This was more important for me during one interview with a white inmate who disclosed that he used to rape black women because he liked them more. When he said he was excited by fear in his victims' eyes, I looked up and there was no guard and I tried figuring out

whether I looked scared or not at that moment. I decided to be brave and continue with interviews under such conditions because I realised that most of the policies are not necessarily implemented mostly due to staff shortages which also impacted on implementation of rehabilitation programmes.

As per The Open University Data protection Act, all research data was stored in an information storage device with inbuilt encryption.

3.6 METHODS

3.6.1 Sampling

Initial interviews with gatekeepers provided leads about appropriate research sites for the study. The next section will look at how sampling was accomplished in the two government departments targeted for the study.

Department of Health and Social Development (DHSD)

Making contact with DHSD officials resulted in an unanticipated benefit to the study. During an informal discussion, the Provincial manager for probation services suggested that the research could benefit from interviews with juveniles awaiting trial for sexual offences against young children held in a DHSD secure care facility. It was agreed that only those who have admitted guilt would be recruited to avoid interfering with judicial processes. This was an interesting lead requiring the use of theoretical sensitivity and the “ability to have insight into the research area combined with an ability to make something of such insights” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 46). Adjustments on the research process were made and a follow up on this lead led to the inclusion of two young persons in the sample. A decision for inclusion of this group was based on their “theoretical relevance for furthering the development of emerging categories” (Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 49).

Department of Correctional Services (DCS)

It was envisaged at the inception of the study that there might be challenges in accessing perpetrators in prisons and specifically those who sexually abused young children. The initial plan to interview a minimum of six perpetrators changed as explained earlier as the study evolved. A total of twenty seven perpetrators of child sexual abuse and one adult sex offender were interviewed from nine Correctional Centres as indicated in table 3.1 below. The adult sex offender was mistakenly identified by prison officials as a perpetrator of child sexual abuse. This highlights the consistent unreliability of the prisoner population records. The researcher accessed court records to verify the status of the participant as an adult sex offender.

Unanticipated successful access to correctional centres in other Provinces enabled access to perpetrators of diverse background, enhanced the theoretical sampling process and led to data saturation of categories. The fundamental differences and similarities between participants became important during analysis to the understanding of the phenomena. Table 3.1 shows the number of correctional centres and participants involved in the study.

Table 3.1: Number of research participants per Correctional Centre

Centre	Province	Number of participants identified	Number recruited for interviews	Number of participants who participated
Correctional Centre 1	Limpopo	1	1	1
Facility for juveniles 2	Limpopo	7	2	2
Correctional Centre 3	Limpopo	3 (1 community member)	3	3
Correctional Centre 3 – Medium A	Limpopo	2	2	1
Correctional Centre 3 – Female and Juvenile Centre	Limpopo	1	1	1
Correctional Centre 4	North West	4	3	3
Correctional Centre 5	Gauteng	3	2	2
Correctional Centre 6	Gauteng	2	0	0
Correctional Centre 7	Gauteng	1	1	1
Correctional Centre 8 Youth Centre	Gauteng	3	3	3
Correctional Centre 8 Medium	Gauteng	1	1	1
Correctional Centre 8 Maximum	Gauteng	5	5	5
Correctional Centre 9	Gauteng	9	8	5
TOTAL		42	32	28

Determining possible sample size was not feasible due to poor documentation but it was not essential for this grounded theory informed approach study as theoretical sampling determined where the next data collection should be (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Numbers of incarcerated perpetrators or those on probation (who sexually abused young children) were only available at respective correctional centres. It was also not easy for officials on site to provide details about numbers of specific target groups because their records did not indicate the age of the victim. It was easy to know how many sex offenders are in the centre but to narrow the numbers to those who specifically sexually abused young children meant the officials had to check individual perpetrator records. This practice was also not helpful because according to officials at correctional centres, the police did not always bring prisoners to the correctional centres with SAP 69 which has offender's details as well as victim's age and gender, as explained earlier in this chapter.

According to officials at the correctional centres, it is a requirement for the police to ensure a sentenced offender is taken to prison with all the relevant paperwork but this problem was reported in all the correctional centres visited in Limpopo, North West and Gauteng Provinces. This meant officials had to depend on the perpetrators' disclosure about the age of the victim. This was not a reliable means of getting information because perpetrators were reluctant to disclose details of their offence. They mentioned during interviews how embarrassing it was for them to disclose the age of the child. Identifying the relevant perpetrators took longer, and often weeks because only those officials who were eager to assist would prioritise the task of sifting through their records to get ages of victims. The process took a shorter time in other prisons where details about the victims' age were often known by officials who might have worked with the offender or have accessed details of the offence by other means.

3.6.2 Recruitment process

The recruitment process was different in all the three Provinces and at each correctional centre. After getting approval from the DCS, the national office appointed a departmental guide at regional level holding the post of regional director, development and care, for Mpumalanga, North West and Limpopo Provinces. In Limpopo and North West, the guide's responsibility was to link the researcher with targeted correctional centres through the respective area commissioners. The area commissioners received a letter from the guide together with the letter of approval for access from the DCS national department. Area commissioners appointed centre guides who were either social workers or were officials working closely with social workers to identify perpetrators who sexually abused young children.

3.6.2.1 Recruitment of participants

Gate keepers in the two identified institutions (DCS and DHSD) were helpful in identifying relevant professionals who acted as information sources and facilitators for access to participants. They played a significant role during recruitment by firstly identifying the numbers and names of potential key participants in their centres. Secondly, they explained challenges of access with regard to how to manage times for interviews taking into consideration prison routine and security measures for the researcher and inmates. As a result, recruitment negotiations took into consideration availability for research interviews, convenient times, duration and suitable meeting places with all informants. Prospective participants were informed that the interview might last for up to three hours. I planned to interview participants once and the time allocated took into consideration the flexibility in grounded theory informed approach to allow informants to tell their story and to, where possible, be opportunistic by pursuing any emerging leads immediately (Charmaz, 2006, p. 29).

When potential participants were identified, they were informed about the study by the social worker/gatekeeper and given an opportunity to indicate willingness to participate. I was then presented with a list of potential participants who were later individually introduced to me. Although I clearly explained that my target group was sex offenders who sexually abused children aged six and lower, the list had offenders with older victims. I decided to discuss my criteria with the potential participants as I made a formal request for participation in the study through an interview. During these discussions, it emerged that age details of some the offenders' victims were contested by offenders mostly when the child was younger than six. Some of them alleged that the police recorded a wrong age for the child, whereas others claimed they did not know how old the child was.

When the request was accepted I went through the information sheet with each participant to explain what the study was all about and how the interview process would proceed as well as any other information the potential participants needed. I also read the consent form and explained the importance of getting consent in writing before proceeding with an interview. All the participants, except for one, agreed to sign the consent form. One participant who did not know how to write used a mark to represent a signature. One participant refused to sign as he did not want to proceed with the interview even though he continued talking about his offence and told me he is giving me permission to use the information he provided for the study.

The recruitment procedure was slightly different for Gauteng correctional centres. The approval letter for extension of research sites from the national DCS stated that the researcher has to make direct contact with area commissioners of targeted correctional centres. In order for the centres to understand the needs for the study some of the area commissioners invited me to the centres to explain the requirements for the study. A social

worker was appointed in each centre or section, in case there was more than one section participating in one centre, to identify potential participants and then liaise with me. I made appointments with social workers, depending on their availability, to visit the centres for recruitment of participants during which I took the participants through the recruitment process as explained above. Where there was only one participant, we agreed with the social worker that I would recruit and conduct the interview immediately depending on the participant's readiness. In centres where there were a higher number of participants as was the case in correctional centres 4, 8, and 9, I dealt with the recruitment process before commencing with interviews.

Two juveniles were accessed through the DHSD, Probation services. The Provincial coordinator for probation referred me to the social workers doing probation services in the districts who informed me about the availability of relevant awaiting trial juveniles, how and where I could access them. The manager of the Juvenile facility appointed the senior social worker to identify, with the assistance of social workers, juveniles who were facing charges for sexual offences against young children. Seven awaiting-trial juveniles were presented to me for recruitment. After a discussion with potential participants, the two found to be suitable, agreed to participate in the study. Two of those who could not participate did not admit to the charges and therefore could not participate as what they disclosed during the study could work against them in court, derail the research process and compromise ethical practice if data gathered during the interview turns into evidence for the trial. The other five juveniles were also excluded as they disputed the ages of their victims suggesting they have committed sexual offences against children older than six.

I conclude this section by providing brief profiles of key informants of the study, the perpetrators in table 3.2. In order to ensure confidentiality pseudonyms were used for participants and correctional centre names were replaced with numbers.

Table 3.2: Participants' profiles.

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
1.Javan	86	African - Tsonga	Never attended school.	10 Years imprisonment	Three 6 year old girls.	Neighbour	Admitted the offence for two children.	He said he was born and raised in poor rural area by mother and stepfather after father's death (date unknown). He alleged childhood sexual abuse by half-sister and cousins. As a young man he was physically violent towards women and lacked interest in intimate relationships. Married later in life and was purportedly coerced into being a polygamist who has had 7 wives who all left him. Reported domestic violence which subsided after democratisation. At the time of the arrest, he was a pensioner, village headman and an archbishop in his church, an affiliate to one national church which has more than 1,800 congregations and about 1.3 million members in South Africa. He claimed the children seduced him and he could not resist because he was lonely after his wife left him.
2.Jasper	69	African - Pedi	Standard 8.	Life imprisonment	4 or 5 year old girl	Neighbour	Denies the offence	Born and raised in an urban area by strict parents who were both educated and aunts until adulthood. Started schooling later in his childhood because parents migrated to Gauteng where he joined them at a later stage. Stopped schooling due to political unrests.

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
3.Phil	60	Afrikaner	Standard 7.	Six life imprisonments	Five 5 year old girls	Daughters	Admitted the offence	<p>Married at 25, divorced and remarried. Alleges the mother to victim was joking when she made an allegation for sexual abuse which she later retracted. He said the child's parent said their intention was to scare him and wrote a letter to withdraw the allegations and the court refused to drop the charges even though there was no DNA evidence. He was unemployed at the time of the arrest</p> <p>He reported being born in a rural town. He alleges he was institutionalised at 5 due to childhood sexual abuse by uncle. Had no contact with own family until in adulthood. He alleges further abuse by staff whilst institutionalised. Married first wife and had 5 children. Sexually abused all 4 daughters when they turned 5 for 14 years. Wife disclosed the abuse after catching him in the act four times. He reports being emotionally abusive to first wife. He was jailed for 5yrs during which he allegedly did not attend rehabilitation programmes. Remarried and had one daughter. Groomed both mother and daughter to perform sexual acts as a family when child turned 5. Produced over 110 sexual images of daughter. He was employed as a driver.</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
4.Kaleb	52	African-Xhosa	Standard 2.	Life imprisonment	Approximately 7 year old girl	Girlfriend's daughter	Denied the offence	<p>He reported being born and raised well in poor rural area by both parents. His father died in 1990. He went to school during the week and was herd boy for family livestock during weekends but now has his own. He started schooling late when he was older because he had to herd the cattle as there was no one else at home. He ended up leaving school because he was older. He started work and having love affairs. He had a first sexual experience at 17 and had a lot of girlfriends. He married in rural areas and left wife when he migrated to urban townships of Gauteng for work. He reports having casual relationships in Gauteng and alleges that his wife and partners know about these relationships.</p> <p>He said he had fights with his girlfriend and her boyfriend about money and her having intimate relationships with other men when she said she would not do that. He said she used to call the police for him or ask his boyfriends to beat him up. He reports that he separated in the same way with his daughter's mother. He alleges that when he overpowered her boyfriend she decided to get rid of him by making up false allegations against him</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
5.Hebron	42	Afrikaner	Standard 7.	Life imprisonment	5 year old girl	Niece	Admitted the offence	<p>accusing him of sexual abuse of her daughter. He alleged that although she was assisted to set up a trap for him, the doctor was not able to do a blood test because they failed to get anything as there was no evidence. He was gainfully employed at the time of the arrest.</p> <p>He said he was raised by multiple carers and was also institutionalised. He claimed that his father suffered mental health and was imprisoned for vehicle theft, stepmother was an alcoholic and abusive. He alleged he was a twin and that he was previously diagnosed as a psychopath. At 12, he learned his biological mother died when he was 2 years old and that she was a prostitute. Alleged physical, emotional and sexual abuse by carers and suggest these experiences triggered obsessions with sex and using sexual violence as a way of exercising control. Alleged using drugs and committing robberies to fund the habit. He reported being jailed seven times for sexual abuse, robberies and theft. He said he was under the influence of alcohol and drugs when he committed the offence. He was gainfully employed at the time of the arrest.</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
6. Matt	41	African - Pedi	Never attended school.	Life imprisonment	Two 6 year old girls (twins)	Daughters	Denied the offence	He refused to give signed consent for the interview but gave details of the offence and permission for information he disclosed to be used for research purposes. He stated that he was born and raised by his mother in a farm. He said he never attended school. He alleged that his wife is a violent woman who was abusive towards him depriving him of food for weeks, beating him up and pouring hot water on him. He also alleged she was an alcoholic who neglected and abusing their children. He stated that he could not report the abuse because men are afraid to report abuse because they'll be laughed at. He alleges that his wife made false child sexual abuse allegations against him because of the differences they had. At the time of the arrest, he was a priest in one of the largest national African churches which has between 2 and 6 million members in more than 4,000 parishes beyond South Africa.
7. Aron	40	African - Tswana	Standard 8.	Life imprisonment	Two 6 year old girls	Neighbour	Denied the offence	He reported that he was born in one rural area and moved to another as parents migrated to a mining town. He states he lost both parents during early adulthood. I went up to Std 8 and at that time ran away and dropped out of school because the then independent state

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								<p>wanted to recruit young men for the army and he did not want to be a soldier. He was later hired at the mine where he worked until he was arrested. He has a partner He reported previous convictions for assaulting a woman and justified it suggesting he was defending his mother from verbal abuse by his victim. He also reported having a good relationship with children in the neighbourhood stating that children love him a lot and he enjoyed playing with them.</p> <p>He denies sexual abuse of two children aged 6 yrs belonging to a neighbour. He alleges he was falsely accused for sexual abuse because his neighbours were jealous of the material improvements he brought into his own family. He further stated that although conflicting evidence was presented in court, police officers did not make an effort to investigate and opted to rely on the statement of the complainant who made false allegations. He argued that the justice system did not work well because his trial was not fairly managed as his views were suppressed.</p>
8.Paul	39	African - Zimbabwe	Standard 5.	Life imprisonment	6 year old girl	Neighbour	Denied the offence	He reported that he was born and raised in a rural town by his parents. After passing std 5

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
		an, Zulu.		nt				he left school and worked as a security officer. He said he was a sportsman early in life and started having a girlfriend when I was 21. He said he used to fish. He stated that he would not sexually abuse young children as he has confidence in his abilities to establish intimate relationships with women because he is not tongue tight (ga longwa ke mmutla) or his tongue is not burnt and has had an opportunity to mingle with other boys and have boy talk and learned from peers.
9. Caiphus	39	African - Tswana	University student in prison.	Life imprisonment	5 year old girl	Niece	Denied the offence	He reported that he was born in a rural area and raised by both parents in an urban area. He stated he was physically and sexually violent to young girls as a young man and that at that time such acts were common practice and went unreported and then taken to be unproblematic to him and his peers. He said most of the relationship started with violence perpetrated by males who were under the impression that girls needed a push to accept their love proposal. He said he was impatient and but has since changed. He reports he has a fiancée who will shortly marry him whilst he is still in prison. He is currently doing

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
10. Abram	37	African - Tswana	Standard 5.	Life imprisonment	5 year old girl	Step-daughter to friend	Denied the offence	<p>undergraduate studies. He disclosed his HIV positive status during interview stating he was unaware of it during the arrest. He alleges that his sister in law was jealous of him. She then made false allegations of child sexual abuse of his niece to get rid of him. Although he reported being very close to his brother, he alleged that his brother was part of the plot even though the brother later confessed and divorced his wife. He alleged that although the brother regrets what happened, he did not know how to correct the situation for fear of tarnishing his position as a high ranking public servant.</p> <p>He stated he was born and raised by both parents in a rural area. He attended school until Std 5 after which he started working for government until he was arrested. He stated he had to stop attending school because his schooling was repeatedly interrupted by ill-health as he is epileptic. He also alleged that he was bewitched and this affected his vision. He reports previous convictions for housebreaking. He said he lost both parents within a short space of time when he was 27 and 28. He has a partner. He alleges that he</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
11. Felix	37	African – Mozambican	Never attended school.	Life imprisonment	3 year old girl	Neighbour	Admitted the offence	<p>was falsely accused by his neighbour. He stated that the victim's stepfather sexually abused her. He alleges that although the alleged perpetrator continued attending court hearings he was not in prison and he continued abusing this child. He then claimed that the friend to the victim's mother told her that since the children are familiar with her partner's friend, Abram, they should incriminate him. He alleged that the mother knew that her partner is sexually abusing her child but falsely accused him because he was drinking.</p> <p>He was born and raised in Mozambique by both parents. Father perpetrated domestic violence which he witnessed. He alleged his mother died when he was 10 as a result of injuries inflicted by his father during domestic violence incidents. He said his father had an extramarital affair before his mother died. The father left him with younger sister after mother's death to live with his mistress. He alleges he had to head a household and care for younger sister for years until father moved back into family home with stepmother. He alleged his father would not allow him to go to school as he had to herd family livestock. He</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
12. Ruben	36	Afrikaner	Standard 9.	4 years Imprisonment	4 year old boy	Son	Admitted the offence	claims he became isolated from peers due to uncontrollable aggression and not attending school. He claims this led to his inability to make love proposal to girls. He moved to South Africa as a young adult. As a Mozambican immigrant he claims he joined gangs due to unemployment. He alleged lost a girlfriend when he visited Mozambique for a long time and was unable to get another one on his own on his return. He alleges he was under the influence of alcohol during the offence. Reported being born and raised well in an urban area by religious maternal grandparents after his mother died early in his childhood. Alleged sexual abuse by stepbrother during childhood. . Alleges he left school due to boredom as his IQ was too high. He alleged interference by his in-laws destroyed his marriage and led to his wife divorcing him whilst in prison. He claims he was a drug user and was under the influence of drugs when he sexually abused his son. He alleges a voice kept on telling him to try out sexual acts which were performed on him during his childhood. He worked for a construction company.
13. Zeb	35	African –	Standard	Life	3 year old	Girlfriend's	Claims	He reported being raised in a rural area by both

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
		Swazi	2.	imprisonment	girl	daughter	uncertainty about whether he committed an offence or not	parents. Father was a polygamist with three wives. Due to poverty, father could not afford to provide for his 25 children's educational needs. Father later died and more half siblings emerged. He claims to love women and said he believes it is an inherited trait because multiple intimate relationships are common in his family and ethnic group. He moved from rural areas to work as a taxi driver in urban areas. As a migrant worker, his customary law partner stayed in rural areas with his son and did not know he had mistresses. He lived with mistresses in an urban area where he worked. Although he alleged he was falsely accused of child sexual abuse, he said he was uncertain about whether he sexually abused the child or not because he was in a drug induced state when the alleged offence occurred. However, he mentioned that he would want to ask for forgiveness.
14. Shepherd	31	African – Venda	University drop-out.	Life imprisonment	Approximately 7 year old girl	Niece	Denied offence	He was born and raised in a rural area by both parents who were professionals and financially stable. He enrolled at a Technikon and later at a University and dropped out allegedly due to due to financial problems when his father passed away. He alleged that his mother has a

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
15. Theo	30	African – Venda	Sub-standard B	Life imprisonment	Approximately 7 year old girl	Stranger	Denied offence	<p>new partner and there is a family conflict over father's estate. He said he believes his mother wanted to get rid of his as he questioned the way his late father's estate was managed by her and her new partner. He alleges his mother used her granddaughter, that is, his niece, to falsely accuse him of sexually abusing his niece to punish him for interfering in her new relationship. He stated that his mother told the child what to say during cross examination. He believes the evidence has been tempered with and that he did not have a fair trial as no evidence was presented during his trial but he was convicted. He was unemployed and single at the time of the arrest.</p> <p>He said he was born and raised by both parents in a rural area under impoverished circumstances. He attended school up to sub-standard B (Year 2) but dropped out because his mother was struggling to provide for the children on her own. He stated that he lived and worked in the farms with his mother to help feed and pay school fees for those who went to school until he got married. Both his parents died in 2000. He denies sexual abuse of a child who he claimed he did not know.</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
16. Phestos	29	African – Mozambican Speaks Portuguese, Spanish and English. Understands Sotho and Zulu.	Standard 7	16 years imprisonment	6 year old girl	Neighbour	Denied offence	<p>However, he says he is now scared of being on his own with his daughters because he knows that it is possible that a woman might coach the children to make sexual abuse allegations against their father to get him arrested. He said that wives use children to get innocent men into trouble if they have differences. He said since he was convicted even though he was innocent, he would prevent the recurrence of this incident by avoiding taking responsibility for the care of his daughters in their mother's absence.</p> <p>He reported being a Mozambican immigrant who came to South Africa at the age of 20 in 2000. He said he lived in one of the largest townships and later moved to an industrial town where he worked until he was arrested. He said he has a twin brother and they were both raised by religious parents moving between Mozambique and Zimbabwe for educational purposes but dropped out of school as he did not enjoy it. He alleged his late mother used excessive physical punishment. He reported being his father's favourite. He started intimate relationships at 19 as a result of peer pressure. He claims to have never used</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
17. Luke	28	African - Sotho	Grade 11	Life imprisonment	5 year old girl	Neighbour	Admitted the offence	<p>violence against women.</p> <p>He said he was surprised that he was arrested for child sexual abuse. He alleged that there was a misunderstanding with the victim's mother. He stated that he gave the mother's telephone number to her ex-partner, father to the victim. He believes that the mother became upset by his actions and then decided to punish him stating: "I will show him, he will stay in prison for a long time".</p> <p>He is currently attending ABET (Adult basic education and training) level 2 classes in prison</p> <p>He said he was orphaned and raised by aunt and maternal grandmother in an urban area. He alleged growing up in a disorganised family where he witnessed domestic violence perpetrated by uncle, who made the family a laughing stock in the community. His late mother was alcoholic and didn't care to send him to school. He started schooling at 8 and was later made to repeat a standard because he stammers. He wrote his grade 12 exams in police custody but failed. Alleged poverty and that he committed robberies to meet basic needs and to provide for his girlfriends. He</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
18. Jerry	28	African - Pedi	Grade 11	Life imprisonment	2 year old girl	Friend's daughter	Claims uncertainty about whether he committed an offence or not	<p>knew his father at 17 and found it difficult to accept father in his life saying he was not there to teach him about manhood. Father died soon thereafter before establishing a father-son relationship. He said he started sexual experimentation at 7 with peers. Although he reported having multiple intimate relationships, he alleged they cheated on him with men who were financially able to give them gifts. He was unemployed and under the influence of alcohol when he committed the offence. He now has a girlfriend in the women section of the same Correctional Centre and there is a regularly exchange of letters between them.</p> <p>He was born and raised in a rural area by his mother. His father left his mother for another woman and never supported the family financially. After failing Grade 12 he decided to join his father so he could help him further his studies. He said when his brother told him about a job opportunity in the city he dropped his educational plans and started working until he was arrested.</p> <p>He alleges that he was falsely accused of child sexual abuse of a four year old and claims</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								police have falsified the record to suggest the child is two years old. However, he admitted that he was in a heavily drug induced state and did not know what happened. He alleges there was no evidence even though he was told there was penetration. He seemed to have knowledge from his reported during the interview about how perpetrators ejaculate outside and avoid hurting the child to hide evidence. He was working as a gardener at the time of the arrest.
19. Titus	26	African – Tsonga	Grade 11	12 years imprisonment	6 year old girl	Cousin	Denied offence	He was born in an urban area and raised by his parents. He reported that his father was physically abusive towards his mother and that he often witnessed the violence incidents and would cry after seeing his mother bleed. His parents separated when he was six. He said he was also raised by his grandmother and uncle. He said he dropped out of school because it was boring for him and all he could think of was drugs, relaxation, going out to see girlfriends and then robbing people. He said he has a criminal record for theft and that he was imprisoned for two years. He said he became sexually active at 17 and girls had a crush on

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								<p>him. He said he could only manage intimate relationships with three girls at one time and all the girls were aware and did not regard the arrangement as problematic. However, they each had intentions to win him and to keep him away from the other two. In an attempt to get him away from drugs and to get him back into education, his mother sent him to a rural area to live with her cousin. He alleges that his mother's cousin ill-treated him and deprived him of pocket money, prevented him from talking to his mother to push him back into crime. He said when he resisted criminal activities false allegations of child sexual abuse were made against him to punish his mother for differences they previously had. He said when he asked his mother about why her cousin mistreated him, she realised that the differences she thought had ended may have led to the false accusation he said he did not commit. He said he was falsely accused because his mother's cousin was jealous of his family. He admits that he may use force against women but alleges he has never been sexually violent towards women.</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
20. Seth	26	African-Xhosa	Grade 3	Life Imprisonment	6 year old girl.	Daughter to sister's friend	Denied the offence	He was born in one of the poorest predominantly rural provinces. His mother died when he was 6. He was raised by maternal grandmother. Father was an alcoholic and migrant worker who never sent monthly remittances for his 7 children's subsistence as he lived with a mistress in urban areas. His father came back home when he was 10. He left school at Std 1 because it was not practical to continue going to school. He tried going back to school at his grandmother's place but he had to herd the cattle. Since no one was working in the household they begged for food. He said he started doing casual jobs to earn a living and later started stealing and was sentenced to corrective supervision as a juvenile. He alleged to have smoked cigarette and marijuana. He alleges he was beaten and forced to admit to sexually abusing a child. He believes people make false sexual abuse allegations because victims are compensated by the state.
21. Nathan	24	African - Zulu	Grade 9.	20 years	6 year old girl	Neighbour	Admitted the offence	He is has a short stature measuring approximately 1.3m. He reported that he was orphaned at 11 and raised by maternal grandmother in the largest township in the

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								country. Although mother was alcoholic, he said she was a caring mother before death. He said he knew his father at 17. Alleged to have been neglected, physically and emotionally abused by carers. Alleged childhood sexual abuse by a young woman in the neighbourhood at 12. Claims that teachers were aware of his neglect but did not intervene. He said attempts to report his abuse to the police worsened his circumstances as he had nowhere else to go. Claims that due to childhood sexual abuse, height, isolation from peers, physical abuse and neglect and lack of financial resources, he struggled to manage intimate relationships with peers and felt more comfortable with young children. Committed the offence at 19.
22. Ben	20	African – Zulu	Grade 11	5 years imprisonment	5yr old boy, the grandson to the woman he cared for.	Employer's grandson	Admitted the offence	He was raised by maternal grandparents and relied on old age pension for subsistence. Due to poverty, after death of grandparents he left home to be a live in carer for an old woman in the neighbourhood. His mother lived with her partner elsewhere. His father had no interest in having a father-son relationship with him. When he visited him, father was never there. He was still at school when he committed the offence. He alleges that he did not intend for

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								the abuse to happen. He claims that whilst urinating, his employer's grandson came to the toilet to ask him what he was doing and he pointed his penis at him and said you're your mouth, and he put it in. He said it was meant to be a joke but he realised it was inappropriate. He claims he committed the offence under the influence of alcohol.
23. Raphael	19	Afrikaner	Grade 7.	6 years imprisonment	18 months old girl.	Neighbour	Admitted the offence	He was initially raised by both parents who moved from one town to another until they separated. He said he used to go out with his father and watch whilst he cheated with other women. He reported that after his parents' separation he never had contact with his father due to father's lack of interest. He then lived with his mother, sister and mother's boyfriend. He alleged witnessing and suffering domestic violence perpetrated by mother's boyfriend. He said they now have a new stepfather who provides well for the family. He said he left school early because his mother did not ensure that he stays in education as he had to work far from school and not assisted to get back to school on time. He alleged childhood sexual abused by male cousin who made him watch pornography and then touched his genitals and

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								also made him touch his genitals. He said his friend's girlfriend aroused him sexually when they were out drinking together. He said his sexually abusive act was his first sexual experience. He said he will be released in a few months but has not attended rehabilitation programmes to address his issues. He said he asked to meet the child's parents to ask for forgiveness and he never had a response from the prison authorities. He reported repeatedly having nightmares and said he fears reoffending after being released because he still has unresolved issues.
24. Saul	19	African – Zulu	Grade 9.	3 years	5 year old girl	Pupil at grandmother's day care facility	Admitted the offence	He was orphaned early during childhood and witnessed domestic violence perpetrated by alcoholic father. He recalls that his father never bought them anything. He was raised in a township by maternal grandmother who was also subjected to domestic violence. He did casual work to augment his grandmother's pension. He has a twin brother. He freezes when he has to make a love proposal. Reported being forced to rape his female friend at gunpoint by a gang. Resorts to physical violence when he believes he is provoked alleging anger management challenges. He

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
25. Marcus	18	African - Zulu	Grade 10.	5 years	5 or 6 year old boy.....	Schoolmate	Denied the offence	<p>reported being a naughty child who sniffed glue, benzene, smoked cigarette and dagga and claimed to have been in a drug induced state when he committed the offence. He alleges due to his inability to initiate intimate relationships, he did not have a girlfriend and he stopped trying as they laughed at him. When his grandmother asked him to watch the children, he saw a chance for sex and said he chose to abuse the older one. Arrested whilst still at school.</p> <p>He was raised by both parents and reports a normal upbringing in an impoverished township dwelling. He said he used to do piece jobs to help his family and that of his girlfriend make ends meet. He has a criminal record for theft. He was given a suspended sentence. He went to school up to Std 8 and had to drop out to attend court hearings as the case was remanded many times. He said he is a quiet person who had to engage in fights with peers to defend himself or his siblings. Although he stated only hitting boys, he said he beat up his girlfriend on more than one occasion. He justified his behaviour as acceptable male behaviour by stating "I used to tell her about</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
26. Emmanuel	17	African – Pedi	Grade 9.	Awaiting trial	Approximately 7 year old girl	Niece	Admitted the offence	<p>how a boy thinks” and that after being told she still irritated him. He became sexually active at 12 and has a child with his first girlfriend. He reported having more than one girlfriend. He alleges that he did not understand why his younger school mate identified him as his abuser because he is not the one who abused him. He is currently studying technology in prison.</p> <p>He reported being orphaned early in life and that he was raised by his sister in a village. He said he never knew his father. He reported paying R10 to for sex with his ±7 year old niece after being aroused by a pornographic DVD he watched. He alleges the DVD was left by his sister in the DVD player. He claims that he did not sexually abuse the child because they had an agreement and he believes no force was used. He alleged that the sexual abuse act was his first sexual experience. Arrested whilst still at school.</p>
27. Steve	16	African – Tsonga	Grade 9	Awaiting trial	5 year old girl	Neighbour	Admitted the offence	<p>He lived with both parents and siblings in a village. He reported having a good relationship with his parents but a strained relationship with his sister. He reported struggling to establish intimate relationships with peers who often</p>

Name	Age of Offender	Ethnicity	Educational level of offender	Sentence	Age and Gender of Victim	Relationship to victim	Admission/Denial of sexual Offence against children	Researcher Comments
								rejected his love proposals. He sexually abused a 5yr old girl in his neighbourhood after watching a pornography DVD. He said it might have been given to him mistakenly because he asked for Van Damme DVD from his friend but when he watched it, it contained pornographic material. Although he denied planning the abuse, he separated the victim from her peer to isolate her for the abuse to happen by sending the other child away on an errand. Arrested whilst still at school.

The next section explains how data was collected during this study.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Fieldwork took place between January 2009 and July 2010. The main research method for the study was the semi-structured interviews. Semi structured interviews were deemed suitable for allowing some flexibility because they consist of a “loose structure” and use open ended questions to encourage participants to “define the area to be explored, at least initially, and from which the interviewer or interviewee may diverge in order to pursue an idea in more detail” (Britten, 1995, p. 251).

A series of semi-structured interviews were used informed by grounded theory informed approach to allow participants to present their own views and explain what those views mean to them (Warren, 2001). A checklist was developed and used to guide and facilitate interviews (see appendix 4). Some of the questions were modified depending on categories that needed to be filled following data analysis during data collection. The modifications allowed follow ups or the testing of data emerging from previously interviewed participants.

Triangulation was also used to enhance the richness of a category and identify differences because, according to Mays and Pope (2000, p. 51), it is “better seen as a way of ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging a more reflexive analysis of the data than as a pure test of validity”. When using triangulation more than one participant would be asked about a concept coded from previous interviews or from an observation of emerging concepts from the concept maps. For example, one perpetrator reported that masturbation is not an option when a man has a sexual urge. When this idea was presented to other participants more data emerged to suggest that some of the men in this study believed masturbation was a health risk. Similarly, although the virgin myth was talked about as an explanation for

sexual abuse of young children, it was rarely mentioned in perpetrator narratives. In some cases where it was not mentioned, I asked perpetrators to comment on vignettes on the virgin myth.

Although the interview guide was useful during data collection, some of the participants expressed through their narratives feelings of shame and guilt in talking about personal experiences in child sexual abuse. Challenges of this nature were brought about by the fact that some participants denied sexually abusing young children and therefore claimed lack of knowledge about the phenomenon. This challenge was anticipated and a plan to use vignettes was put into place. A selection of narratives from interviews with community groups which emerged as strong leads for the development of categories about the phenomenon were developed into real life four staged vignettes (see appendix 6). Vignettes are defined as “short scenarios or stories in written or pictorial form which participants can comment upon” (Renold, 2002, p. 3).

The vignettes were intended to help desensitize the interview by allowing participants to distance themselves from potentially difficult discussions (Finch, 1987; Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve and Pescosolido, 1999; Rahman, 1996) and preventing discomfort for participants (Janssen et al., 2009). As a result, most perpetrator narratives illustrate this distancing which I will highlight in the data chapters where perpetrators talk about themselves as if they were talking about others. Furthermore, vignettes became useful in ensuring focus during the interview as well as serving as a stimulus for deeper exploration (Hughes, 1998; Sim, Milner, Love and Lishman, 1998). The distancing effect on participants meant that socially desirable patterns of responding were reduced (Finch, 1987) and their reaction to the vignettes mirrored their attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about sex with young children. For example, when presented with a story about an old man who had sex with three six year old girls after feeding them, most perpetrators supported

the perpetrator's action by suggesting that he was entitled to sex with the children because he fed them. Others reported that "once you buy beer or give out money you have an expectation for sex" from the recipient regardless of age. The vignettes became an invaluable tool in bringing out concepts that depicted some "subtleties and nuances that only insiders are usually aware of" (Lieberman cited in Sumrall and West, 1998)

Although vignettes played an important role in theoretical sampling as emerging data was used to probe into and develop emerging and relevant categories (Wilks, 2004), there were limitations. These were around how data gathered using vignettes would be analysed. However, the main aim of the study was to understand how perpetrators made sense of sex with children and not necessarily in terms of offenses they were arrested for. The use of vignettes provided distancing and allowed them to first talk as the third person and become more comfortable to present issues the way they perceived them. The vignette as a method of data collection facilitated a non-threatening environment for the "exploration of participants' subjective belief system" (Renold, 2002, p. 3). Data generated through vignettes and that which was elicited through the semi-structured interview had congruence. Both sources of data were used in the same way during data analysis.

An audio recorder and note book were used to capture data during interviews. One interview was not recorded as the participant did not give consent and notes were compiled during and after the interview to ensure key issues were recorded.

Interviews lasted from forty minutes to three hours with an average of ninety minutes per interview. A total of sixty three hours of formal interviews were recorded.

Eight South African languages were used during the interviews including North Sotho, South Sotho, Tswana, Venda, Tsonga, Zulu, Afrikaans and English. I did not use translation services as I have some basic knowledge about all the eight languages. I was

born in Soweto, the South African labour reservoir at the beginning of the migratory labour system to date, where there is an opportunity to live with and learn about people from various South African ethnic backgrounds. The success of communication during interviews was due to the fact that both I and the participants, who also knew more than one language, were able to cooperate to ensure understanding of what was discussed. We negotiated at the beginning of the interview about which language would be used but we often used more than one language to ensure clarity of what was said.

In correctional centres, interviews were conducted either in the professional's office, meeting room, visiting area or corridor near the prison cells. The venue was dictated by availability of office space and security measures, that is, if there was no official who would watch over me during interviews. The social worker's office was used at the DHSD's Juvenile facility.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

3.8.1 Data capture

I translated digitally recorded interviews from seven languages into English (Berman, 2011; Douglas and Craig, 2007; Meleis, 1996; Glaser, 197). I transcribed in detail, verifying for correct interpretation by listening repeatedly to the recording (Witcher, 2010; Tilley, 2003; Easton, McComish and Greenberg, 2000; Poland, 1995). Numbering was used to preserve anonymity of participants on transcripts and a separate sheet was kept for pseudonyms I chose for participants. Password protected OU computer and laptop, only accessible to me, were used to store data. Paper files were kept under lock and key.

Data generated from gatekeepers and participants was captured in a diary, field notes and memos. The research diary was the first form of data gathered from the onset of the study

to cover field work and the entire research process. It contained information about activities undertaken towards the achievement of the research project as well as reflection on processes that took place. The period of reflection in a diary “prompted insights which informed a variety of methodological and theoretical decisions in relation to the research” (Nadin and Cassell, 2006, p. 208). It also provided space for me to explore anxieties on challenges in researching a sensitive topic including frustrations during access, fears around conducting interviews in high security prisons, ethical issues and self-doubt as a novice researcher.

3.8.2 Memoing

Part of writing a research diary and reflection included writing memos. Memos, referred to as “informal analytical notes” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 72) played a pivotal role in sensitizing my awareness, as a researcher, to emerging categories and accidental opportunities. Memos were used to make decisions on theoretical sampling about whether to pursue leads during data gathering; about which categories are important for the study, to ask questions about what the data was telling me, and whether there was a need to incorporate questions on some of the emerging categories when interviewing other participants. For example,

Box 3.1 Research diary 1

<p>A social worker is saying she is not sure why perpetrators sexually abuse infants as she has never asked them. She is suggesting that they are motivated by the virgin myth. It could be that she has not worked in the child sexual abuse field for long.</p>

Box 3.2 Research diary 2

A child protection police officer is saying perpetrators are normal. He asked them for an explanation and they said they didn't know why they did it. He therefore does not trust anyone including his family with his own children. He is saying he is suspicious because he believes anyone can do it but not sure where to look for signs. He has extensive experience in the police force and he is struggling to come up with an explanation but he is surely ruling out the virgin myth as an explanation by reporting about his efforts to get all the victims tested. Tests have been negative. This suggests perpetrators in his cases were negative.

As I reflected, I noticed differences in viewpoints between professionals about the virgin myth. I also noticed that some of their views are similar to those from community groups. When listening to perpetrators' narratives there was a definite silence about the virgin myth as an explanation. The reflection here suggested that perpetrators would be important in providing explanations about the reasons for their silence, that is, not talking about the virgin myth. This line of thought led to more exploration on perpetrator explanations for sexual abuse of young children as well as how they made sense of the virgin myth.

3.8.3 Coding

Data analysis began immediately after the first interview and became an integral part of data collection. This iterative process enabled theoretical sampling as data was checked for emerging concepts and categories and these were used for decision-making about what else to look for and who the suitable target participants would be. In doing analysis, coding was used. Charmaz (2006, p. 46) defines coding as "the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data". Initial analysis was conducted using line by line coding for the first four interviews, conducted at the beginning of fieldwork

with professionals and community groups, to identify relevant concepts and where possible categories relating to child sexual abuse. This process was repeated when interviews with perpetrators commenced. Constant comparison between the data sets highlighted that there are differences in explanations offered by perpetrators when talking about sex with children to those of community members. Throughout the analysis process the researcher stayed close to the data to see what the data suggests and where possible participants' words were used during coding.

The coding process was first done manually with notes written on the right margin of a transcript. Some of the transcripts in the early phases of the study were given to colleagues in South Africa and supervisors for comments on emerging codes and similar concepts were identified illustrating intercoder reliability. New codes kept on emerging from interviews and to achieve high diversity in emerging categories in line with grounded theory informed approach, they were explored.

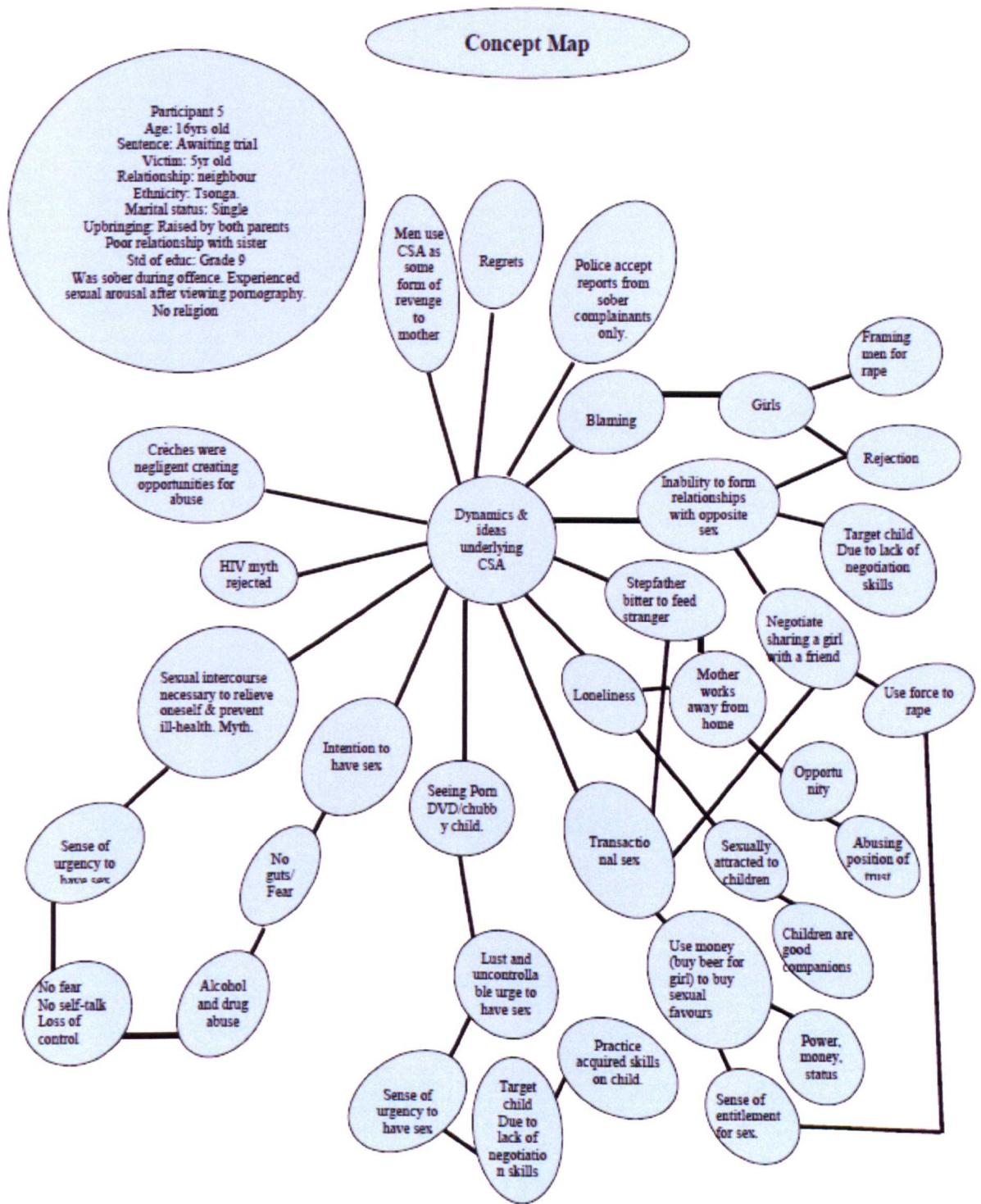
To achieve the best results during analysis whilst at the same time easing the burden of manual coding, both manual and electronic coding techniques were used. The computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), Nvivo 8 was used. Nvivo 8 was helpful in efficiently organising data for coding by grouping similar codes from different participants together. This process made filing and data retrieval easy when excerpts were needed during analysis and it avoided the manual cutting of codes from transcripts into pieces of paper (Welsh, 2002). However, I did not neglect the manual aspect completely as I cut and paste excerpts of codes to fit the pieces together to identify connections and a segue in the storyline within a particular category. The use of Nvivo 8 also assisted in identifying sources of a particular code, and popular codes such as denial and blame. Blame was coded for instances where participants either denied or justified sex with children as was the case with Javan in the following extract:

“Then those children said come and have sex with us...they actually said it well and said come and fuck us. I said oh...and I also...Satan also...God left me and ...”

One hundred and sixty codes were generated from transcripts of thirteen perpetrators who admitted to sexually abusing children. There was a striking similarity between those who admitted and those who denied committing the offence. The lesser codes on those who denied were explained by the fact that they said less during interviews whereas those who admitted offered deeper explanations about how they made sense of their own acts of sex with young children.

The use of Nvivo 8 was preceded by the design of concept maps for each of the first seven perpetrators to make sense of data and label codes using participants' words as far as it was possible (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). According to Novak and Gowin (2008) “concept maps are tools for organizing and representing knowledge. They include concepts, usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts or propositions, between two concepts”. The concept maps were useful in stimulating creative thinking to aid analysis through making connections between concepts and emerging categories and then through the comparison of concepts and categories between different data sets. Their use provided a visualisation of how participants made sense of sex with young children. I used concepts emerging from one participant to explore the idea further in the next interviews with other participants. Concept maps also gave a visualisation of similarities and differences between data sets enabling constant comparative analysis. Some of the core categories began emerging but remained tentative until at the end of analysis when they were integrated with others to provide an explanation that made sense about sex with children (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The following diagram, Figure 3.1, illustrates how concept maps were used in the study depicting emerging concepts from participants.

Fig 3.1 Concept map for participant 5



The iterative process of data collection and analysis was open to allow new categories to emerge so that as many explanations as possible could be uncovered. The benefit was that this avoided limiting the exploration of what was going on about the phenomenon (Dey, 1999) even though it led to more interviews to fill emerging categories.

As categories emerged from grouping codes, they were constantly reviewed, redesigned and reintegrated into explanations about sex with children (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Some of the key emergent themes/categories included “the HIV/AIDS virgin cleansing myth”, “inability to form intimate relationships with women”, “childhood sexual abuse”, “childhood adversities”, “socio-economic backgrounds”, “remorse”, “sense of entitlement to sex”, “denial of responsibility”, “justification for sex with young children”, “sexual attraction to children” and “gender inequitable views about masculinity and power”. For purposes of this study, focus will be on “the HIV/AIDS virgin cleansing myth”, “denial of responsibility”, “sense of entitlement”, “childhood adversities” and “explanations for sexual attraction to children”.

3.9 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In presenting findings of the study focus was mainly on addressing the research question, understanding how perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with young children. Perpetrator narratives offered a deeper exploration into the phenomenon as not much has been written about perpetrator narratives on sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. I only draw on other community participants’ narratives where it adds value to narratives by perpetrators.

The voices of key research participants predominate in this thesis. However, participants were not given equal space when using their extracts. This was mainly because the

strongest extracts were used to support emerging explanations during the analysis. Furthermore, it is important to note that most participants used euphemism by talking about having sex as “I sleep” or “I slept with her” or “I asked her to sleep with me”. The use of these phrases is culturally acceptable due to taboos around the use of sexual language which is regarded as vulgar. Caini, Schensul and Mlobeli (2011, p. 476) note that “an individual's language choice for sexual communication is influenced by gender roles and power differentials”.

Other aspects of language choice emerged when participants found it easier to distance themselves from their explanations of sexually inappropriate acts towards young children by often using ‘they’ instead of ‘I’. I highlight such instances in data chapters when they happen.

Drawing on constructivist grounded theory, I have used my own voice to interpret the narratives of these perpetrators in a more accessible and organised way to make sense of sexual abuse of young children in this context. I used my voice because I had the opportunity to engage with and encourage the elicitation of these narratives. The findings are presented in chapters’ four to seven and use perpetrators’ own words to illustrate the emerging categories.

3.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter described the journey of this research illustrating how it evolved, and why the focus changed from community focused study on child sexual abuse to that of perpetrators. It also explained the rationale for choosing the specific methodological approach. Using a grounded theory informed approach in this exploratory study facilitated the flexibility to collect particularly rich data in order to seek plausible explanations of the phenomenon

studied. Like all other sensitive topics, this study demanded robust ethical procedures. This chapter has demonstrated the ways in which the ethical procedures were followed through submitting applications to various research sites as well as negotiating with participants for informed consent prior to interviews. It chronicles a brief discussion on specific ethical dilemmas encountered during fieldwork.

The sampling procedures employed in this study served to identify and recruit relevant participants as well as identifying specific concepts which might need to be considered in order to seek to explain the phenomenon. The data were captured primarily through the use of a diary, field notes, digital recordings, interview transcripts and organisational documents.

Social constructionism was used as a lens to make sense of the data, to understand how participants made sense of their experiences, note how their explanations changed throughout their accounts, as well as how they positioned themselves in these explanations. Furthermore, I described how data were analysed using grounded theory informed approach ensuring that the analysis stayed as close as possible to participants' words. Lastly, in presenting the findings, I chose to use myself as a vehicle through which the stories of the participants are heard by interpreting their narratives.

CHAPTER 4 - HIV/AIDS VIRGIN MYTH

Abram: The magistrate would say it. He would just tell the accused that 'we know that you are saying AIDS is cured by sex with a child'. I was shocked to hear that wondering where all that comes from. You'll be cured but you'll end up in prison, so it's the same.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I examine data on perpetrator perceptions about the virgin myth in relation to HIV/AIDS and child sexual abuse. These narratives were selected because of their relevance in responding to the research question about whether the virgin cure is a motivator for sexual abuse of very young children. This chapter starts with a general overview of perpetrators' understanding of the virgin cleansing myth, exploring their knowledge about the myth and how they say that they got to know about it. The chapter also examines perpetrator narratives about how community members and professionals make sense of sexual abuse of young children using the myth as an explanation as well as how perpetrators themselves make sense of the virgin myth narratives in relation to sexual abuse of young children.

4.2 IF YOU HAVE SEX WITH A CHILD YOU WILL BE CURED OF HIV.

Participants' narratives suggest that some were not familiar with the virgin cleansing myth. Theo, 30, and Marcus, 18, denied sexually abusing young children. They also claimed they never heard about the myth before the interview. Theo said:

Theo: To say if I have sex with a child I will be cured of HIV?

K: Yes.

Theo: *I have no clue.*

K: *Have you ever heard about that?*

Theo: *I never heard about it I just heard it right now.*

Although some participants claimed lack of knowledge about the virgin cleansing myth, several narratives suggested that they knew but were hesitant to acknowledge this. In Kaleb's narrative, he contradicted himself by moving between 'I don't know' and 'I don't want to lie' whilst at the same time acknowledging that he heard that children are targeted by AIDS sufferers. His narrative illustrates this hesitance in talking about what he knew about the myth:

Kaleb: *I don't know, I would be lying. Others have illnesses. I heard that if a person has a certain illness.*

K: *Tell me about it.*

Kaleb: *Like AIDS. A person would run after children.*

K: *Why would he go to children when he has the illness?*

Kaleb: *I don't know.*

Participants who claimed lack of awareness or were reluctant to talk about the myth were, as indicated earlier in this section, mostly those who denied sexually abusing young children. Their reluctance to talk about the virgin cleansing myth may have been attempts to position themselves as having no interest in sex with young children. Kaleb's extract illustrates this point:

K: *What did you hear?*

Kaleb: *I don't know. That is what I hear from people talking. I don't want to lie. I do not have experience about that.*

Furthermore, their narratives also illustrate that their reluctance to talk about the virgin cleansing myth were often attempts to avoid discussing any issues related to the sexual abuse of children to avoid being implicated to the offence. They often distanced themselves from any knowledge that could suggest they had interest in issues about sex with children to avoid the stigma related to being labelled HIV positive. Distancing themselves from sexual abuse can be seen as a way of maintaining their image of themselves as innocent in the eyes of others and to themselves. Some of the participants stated that they have or were planning to appeal against their sentences. This therefore reinforced the importance of claiming to be innocent and lack of knowledge about matters of the myth and sexual abuse of young children. In such cases it was important for some of these men to allege they were falsely accused when they denied the offence as will be discussed in chapter 5.

Although a minority of participants maintained that they either did not know or had very little information about the virgin myth, the majority of participants suggested that they were aware of the myth. They mostly reported that information dissemination about the virgin cleansing myth was through both electronic and paper media. They said they mainly accessed information from the radio and TV during news broadcasts or through the popular educational drama series called Soul City.

Titus: About AIDS we used to hear about it during the news broadcast and AIDS/HIV programmes that there are people who believe that if they have sex with small children they will be cured of AIDS. They will move from positive to negative. I heard a lot about that and also from Soul City TV programme, I used to watch that.

Participants illustrated awareness of the myth by presenting *the virgin cleansing myth as an unfounded rumour (Zeb)*, suggesting a certain distance in belief between themselves and

people who believe in the virgin myth. Shepherd's narrative illustrates the content of this rumour and how it is understood in his community:

Shepherd: Okay. Yeah, I think, there is this rumour that always if I can have sex with a child, when you are HIV positive, it's quite much easy for you to be...it's like it's a cure, a remedy, to 'sleep' [have sex] with a child it's a remedy for HIV.

This point is further illustrated by Zeb. His extract illustrates that some of these men did not believe in the rumours about the virgin cure:

Zeb: I found out that it was just a story which emerged from nowhere. There is no such a thing that when you have sex with a small child you'll be cured.

This study shows that some perpetrators claimed having little or no knowledge of the 'virgin myth' and those who reported knowledge about the myth tended to distance themselves from those people who believed in the myth. That is, they said there were 'rumours' about the efficacy of sexual intercourse with virgins as a cure for HIV/AIDS. It is not absolutely clear whether most of those in the group that were interviewed, who had heard the 'rumours' of the virgin myth, believed these rumours or not. However, in subsequent discussion with perpetrators who did not deny their abusive behaviour, when they were asked to explain their behaviour and sexually abusive behaviour in general they did not cite the virgin myth as a motivating factor. Arguably, if it were a motivator it could feature strongly in any perpetrator account since it (can be said to be) the equivalent of the mitigating circumstances. It is plausible that most people would seek to normalise any abusive behaviour.

It seemed clear that perpetrators wished to distance themselves from the 'virgin cleansing myth' as an explanation for their actions. Why might this be? Besides the implications this had on their alleged innocence and HIV status, they had another explanation; that they understood it was their accusers and prosecutors who used the myth against them, for example, carers, community members, prison inmates and the courts. The following section looks into perpetrators' understanding of the virgin myth in relation to sexual abuse.

4.3 HOW PERPETRATORS MAKE SENSE OF THE VIRGIN MYTH NARRATIVES IN RELATION TO SEXUAL ABUSE OF YOUNG CHILDREN.

In the previous section perpetrators reported being offended by their accusers' explanations which suggested they were motivated by the need for a cure to sexually abuse young children. Although the ambient social networks, for this group of individuals, contained people who believed the virgin myth, these networks did not seem to be as powerful as the media to influence their beliefs about the myth. Participants expressed scepticism about the veracity of the virgin cleansing myth as a cure for HIV/AIDS and denied that it was their motivation for the offence.

Although "most men who perpetrate child sexual abuse probably do not even know their HIV status" (Dawes, Richter and Higson-Smith, 2004, p. 9) in South Africa, perpetrators in this study claimed to have known their status which for some was confirmed by tests done whilst they were in prison. They reported being HIV negative and used this purported HIV negative status to deny they were motivated by the need for a cure to sexually abuse young children. Furthermore, they suggested that they did not believe in the myth, stating that it is untrue that sex with a virgin cures AIDS because the claim is not supported by scientific

evidence. For example, Luke, 28, who admitted to sexual abuse of his neighbour's five year old girl, stated:

Luke: *These people thought that to finish HIV/AIDS, it's better to sleep with younger children because you will finish this disease but this thing is a lie. It wasn't scientifically proven.*

By saying that there is lack of scientific evidence about the virgin myth, and that HIV/AIDS is an incurable health condition, perpetrator narratives suggest that they know about complexities in HIV/AIDS. They also know that sexual intercourse with a child would not result in a cure but would instead cause harm as the child is infected with the HIV virus. Emmanuel, 17, admitted to bribing and sexually abusing his 7 year old cousin after being aroused by a pornographic DVD. He stated:

Emmanuel: *No, you can't be cured.*

K: *You can't be cured?*

Emmanuel: *No, you will just infect the poor child with HIV.*

This aspect is illustrated further in the following extract. Stephen, 16, admitted to isolating a neighbour's daughter, 5, from her peers and sexually abusing her after being aroused by a pornographic DVD. He stated that this incident was his first sexual experience. He said:

Stephen: *No, but with that you won't be cured.*

K: *You won't be cured?*

Stephen: *The problem with AIDS is that it's incurable.*

K: *It's incurable?*

Stephen: *Once you are infected, you will die with it.*

K: *Even if you could have sex with a virgin?*

Stephen: *No. Since there is no cure that means even a virgin will not do anything to it.*

K: *What will happen then?*

Stephen: *She will become ill.*

Having clearly demonstrated that they mostly do not perceive the virgin myth as a motivation for sex with children, some participants explain this as an invention because, as illustrated above, they seem to not believe that there is such a thing as the virgin cure. This point is illustrated in Zeb's statement:

Zeb: *... a story which emerged from nowhere. There is no such a thing that when you have sex with a small child you'll be cured.*

Although some participants' narratives claim that there is no logical explanation to support claims about the virgin cure, they suggest that the myth might have been invented to serve as an excuse by those with intentions to sexually abuse young children. To illustrate this point Luke said:

Luke: *It wasn't scientifically proven because what they are doing is to justify their bad action, bad behaviour towards young children.*

This point is illustrated further by Aron. Aron denied sexual abuse of two six year old girls in his neighbourhood. He said:

Aron: *There is no such a thing as getting a cure of AIDS by having sex with a virgin. It is just a way of transmitting the disease. In other words, I am committing murder. I do it knowing exactly what shouldn't be done and I ignore the rules and make my own rules and*

drink when I am not supposed to. That child is not aware of the fact that I have AIDS and I go and have sex with her making her sick...maybe she might have sex with her boyfriend or with another man infecting the poor man with the illness.

According to some of the participants' narratives people who commit sexual abuse do so not to be cured but with malicious intentions of causing harm to the victim and simultaneously spreading HIV. Further explanations about malicious intentions inherent in sexual abuse of young children are discussed in chapter seven.

In this section, perpetrator narratives illustrated that these men do not believe the virgin cleansing myth is a motivator for sexual abuse of young children. Their narratives illustrate that to them the myth is false and has no scientific evidence to suggest it is a cure. Furthermore, they have demonstrated that they have sufficient knowledge to the effect that HIV/AIDS is incurable and even sex with a virgin would not cure it but would lead to the spread of the virus, harming children's health. In further attempts to offer explanations about sexual abuse of young children, some perpetrators stated that it is only those perpetrators who have interest in children who would use the myth as an excuse for sexual abuse. Their narratives also demonstrate that they believed those who use the virgin cleansing myth as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children are doing so to justify and cover up deliberate malicious intentions to harm children and spread the HIV/AIDS virus. The next section will look into explanations offered by participants about how their accusers and prosecutors used the myth to suggest that an attempt to be cured from HIV/AIDS had motivated them to sexually abuse young children.

4.4 PERPETRATOR NARRATIVES ABOUT HOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PROFESSIONALS MAKE SENSE OF THE VIRGIN MYTH

Whereas the virgin myth was interpreted as a rumour by most participants in this study, some of the participants' narratives suggest that the virgin myth narrative was actively used by other people, including community members and professionals to explain the sexual abuse of young children. Some perpetrators in this study said that in the process of being arrested, tried and convicted it had been put to them that they had sexually abused young children because they hoped to cure themselves of HIV/AIDS. That is, whatever perpetrators' beliefs about the virgin myth, it had been a construct used by accusers, mainly carers, community members, magistrates and prosecutors in their dialogue with alleged perpetrators. It is possible that in the eyes of alleged or actual perpetrators the virgin myth was seen as an imposition by the forces hostile to them.

Earlier in this chapter I suggested that the virgin myth might be used by perpetrators to help normalise their abusive behaviour. Two central issues emerge. The first one is that perpetrators are positioned as backward and poorly educated because they are seen to believe the virgin myth. The second one is that the expression knowledge of the virgin myth is seen to be admission of guilt. Although upholding their accusers and prosecutors' explanations for abuse meant that the perpetrator lost control of the narrative around an event they were central to, it provided a defence for their behaviour. So that while it is possible in a superficial sense to use the virgin myth to normalise child sexual abuse as a form of self-medication in order to survive, there was no evidence from narratives of participants in this study that it was used as a useful defence at all. To admit to believing in the virgin myth would reinforce their accusers' belief in the alleged perpetrators' guilt and HIV status which brings with it stigmatisation by others. Therefore assuming that alleged

and actual perpetrators do actually know about the virgin cleansing myth and fear stigmatisation and weakening of appeal applications explained earlier in the previous section, their narratives suggest they have an active interest in distancing themselves from the virgin myth as a credible explanation for their actions.

In distancing themselves from the myth some perpetrators' narratives (for example, Seth, and Javan) suggested that carers of children who have been abused claimed that perpetrators have AIDS even though there is no evidence to suggest they do. This claim did not seem to be of concern to most of the perpetrators as they reported knowledge of being HIV negative and further demonstrated through their narratives that the myth was not a valid explanation for child sexual abuse. Seth said:

Seth: They [carers] also said I have AIDS and I didn't worry about that. I was tested again later and it was found that I was not positive. If I was positive when I raped her, she should be positive as well...That was not taken into consideration even when I asked. I was then sentenced to life imprisonment and three months which have to run concurrently. I was shattered. I was confused because I didn't even know what they were talking about. If I was from a rich family and had money, I would have had a lawyer.

Although the accusations for child sexual abuse were unacceptable, their association with HIV/AIDS seemed to be perceived as stigmatising to others and thus more problematic to those participants. Javan's narrative suggests he became more humiliated by suggestions that he had AIDS more than accusations of abusing three children. Participants reported that accusations were from more than one source. Javan explained that his wife, together with the community allegedly humiliated him with insults and by insinuating that he is HIV positive and therefore had sex with the three children to cure himself of AIDS. His

narrative further suggested that the sexual abuse charge gave his enemies power to make malicious accusations based on grudges they previously had against him.

Javan: Ei, angry, angry. They [community] were upset before this offence. They used to say we do not want to be ruled by a Shangaan.¹⁶ They used to insult me saying dirty headman, dirty headman¹⁷. Yeah, they were very upset and this gave them a lot of power...and they got me and they were very powerful. Yeah, they 'toi toid' (protest march) there and as I told you, they published [my ex-wife's accusation that I had AIDS] on newspapers...I even have AIDS. ... Yes, that woman said I have but I said let's go to the hospital and she refused. I went to the clinic and they tested me and said I don't have it. Even here when I arrived in 2007, they tested me and said your blood is ok...that's how they humiliated me saying that when I went to those children, I wanted to cure myself from AIDS.

Besides accusations by carers in the community the idea of the virgin myth as a motivation for child sexual abuse was used by the prison inmates as well. Caiphus said some of his inmates, who did not commit sexual offences, used the virgin cleansing myth as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children during rehabilitation programme sessions. He suggested that remarks made by inmates were offensive and based on lack of

¹⁶The name Shangaan derives from the name of their founder Soshangaane, an exiled Nguni military leader (Jenkins, 2008) who established his command over a large Tsonga population in the northern Transvaal in the mid-nineteenth century. The descendants of some of the conquered populations are known as the Shangaan, or Tsonga-Shangaan. The name of the people in their own language is Vachangan and their language is called Xichangana (Jenkins, 2008). The Shangaan is a diverse group of people, generally including the Thonga, Tonga, and several smaller ethnic groups. Together they numbered about 1.5 million people in South Africa in the mid-1990s, with some 4.5 million individuals in southern Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Byrnes, 1996). During apartheid South Africa, a Tsonga-Shangaan Bantustan, Gazankulu, was created out of part of northern Transvaal Province (now referred to as Limpopo Province) during the 1960s. It was granted self-governing status in 1973. During the 1980s, there were frequent conflicts between Gazankulu residents and their Pedi-speaking neighbours in the Lebowa homeland. Although clashes between these poor homelands were mostly over political and economic issues, their ethnic differences were exploited by the apartheid government policies of divide and rule to worsen the situation (Jenkins, 2008).

¹⁷ According to the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act No. 41 of 2003, whenever the position of senior traditional leader, headman or headwoman is vacant, the royal family concerned must, within a reasonable time identify, according to customary law, a person who qualifies to fill the position. The person must be in good standing and he or she will be elected or appointed in terms of customary law and customs.

knowledge by illiterate people. He disclosed during the interview that he is HIV positive but was unaware at the time of his arrest. He explained:

Caiphus: I was very ill after being sentenced. I was very weak and was even admitted to hospital for HIV...I was HIV positive actually. So, after recovering, when I attended courses on HIV/AIDS, I used to hear them talking and it used to offend me. It offended me but that is the information I got.

K: What was offending you?

Caiphus: You find that they say most of the people who are HIV positive...they are having sex with young people so that they could get rid of HIV and AIDS...

K: You said they talked about having sex with a child when you are HIV positive in the session. Where do they get these stories?

Caiphus: No they get this from the media. They just talk and it's difficult because in prison you communicate with people some of whom are illiterate and they don't know.

Some participants reported that they heard about the virgin myth in court. They reported that professionals believed that this was a dominant narrative which drives perpetrators to sexually abuse young children. This point is illustrated in Abram's explanation which illustrates how he distances himself from the belief to claim a lack of interest in sex with children. Abram, 37, denied sexually abusing his friend's five year old stepdaughter. He stated:

Abram: It's there. There are people who used to do that who have children. I heard people talking saying blah, blah, saying a small child can cure AIDS. I don't understand what is going on here but that didn't get to me because I am not into sex with children.

K: They are saying a small child cures AIDS?

Abram: They say if a person has AIDS, having sex with a child would cure AIDS. I told myself that what they are saying doesn't make sense. To me no, I am not impressed with that kind of discussion.

K: Where did you hear about that?

Abram: In courts during my trial. I used to listen to other hearings.

K: How did it come about?

Abram: The magistrate would say it. He would just tell the accused that 'we know that you are saying AIDS is cured by sex with a child'. I was shocked to hear that wondering where all that comes from. You'll be cured but you'll end up in prison, so it's the same.

K: Was it your magistrate saying that?

Abram: No, to other people if a child was involved...in cases of child sexual abuse. You'll hear the magistrate saying 'we know...we heard that you guys are saying that sex with a child cures AIDS.

Some of the perpetrators put the virgin myth on a par with other 'stories' which suggested cures for HIV/AIDS: for example, featuring claims by traditional healers that they have powers to cure HIV/AIDS. One participant argued that the 'story' about curative powers of traditional healers was unfounded suggesting that if it was 'true' the discoverer would not shy away from claiming such a discovery.

Zeb: I heard that some traditional healers have said they are able to cure it but that is still a story as well because there is no way in which you would hide if you know how to cure HIV.

Participants who perceived the myth as stories seemed concerned about misinformation and their narratives suggested they had an interest in searching for alternative information.

Zeb: People just formulate these stories, sister, because last time I was not feeling well and I asked to see a doctor. When I got to the hospital I got a chance to talk with the doctor about information I needed about HIV. I then asked him if it's true that a person who has HIV could be cured by a traditional healer. He said never. He told me that if I ever find out that I am HIV positive I must never take traditional medicine because many people have died because they dodged treatment and resorted to traditional medicine. You must take your treatment if you are positive maybe if we are lucky we might find a cure for HIV.

The narratives in this section illustrate that perpetrators claim that the virgin myth as an explanation for sexual abuse of young children is used by their accusers and prosecutors. Most of the perpetrators found the virgin cleansing myth explanation 'shocking' and 'humiliating' as they mostly claimed to be HIV negative and retorted that if they were HIV positive their victims would have been infected. This therefore suggests that those who are not involved in perpetrating sexual abuse against young children are using the virgin myth in an attempt to find plausible explanations to make sense of the sexual abuse of young, but also to use the myth to humiliate the alleged perpetrators.

4.5 SUMMARY

The data in this chapter illustrates that some participants claimed lack of or limited knowledge about the virgin myth or tended to distance themselves from it and dissociate themselves from any form of interest in sexual abuse of young children. Perpetrators claimed that the virgin myth was used against them by their accusers and prosecutors and could not be used by alleged or actual perpetrators to normalise what they did. Whether the perpetrators accepted or denied the accusations against them, the virgin myth was not used as an effective defence. It often seemed to them that it was an imposition or a kind of weapon that others invented or imposed to explain their behaviour. We also learnt that in

practice these perpetrators did not ‘buy in’ to the suggested curative powers of ‘traditional healers’. Rather they were sceptical about such claims which were equated with the virgin myth. This was reinforced by the findings in section 4.4. The evidence illustrated that when specifically asked about the virgin myth it seemed to them to be “a story which emerged from nowhere” (Zeb). It also became very clear from the interviews that the perpetrators knew that HIV/AIDS was effectively incurable and that sexual intercourse with a virgin of any age would be an ineffective cure. These explanations suggest that the perpetrators in this study had sufficient knowledge about HIV/AIDS and therefore were aware that the myth is false. Furthermore, their claimed HIV negative status, which could not be confirmed, suggested there would not be an interest in the virgin cure. Therefore their scepticism concerning the virgin cleansing myth can be inferred.

Most importantly, none in this group of perpetrators described themselves as motivated by the virgin cleansing myth to sexually abuse young children. Therefore, (a) given the absence of the virgin myth as an explanatory motivator of admitted abuse, (b) the purported lack of knowledge of the virgin myth and the ‘distancing language’ used by perpetrators to separate themselves from people who believe in the myth, (c) the lack of evidence to suggest the virgin cleansing myth was a motivation, and (d) the alternative explanations they offered for their sexually abusive behaviour in the next three chapters, it seems reasonable to conclude that perpetrators in this group may have not been motivated by the virgin myth to sexually abuse young children.

However, prior to explaining their motives for sexually abusing young children, perpetrators engaged in a process of denial. The next chapter presents perpetrator narratives of denial of responsibility and a lack of recognition of the harmful impact of their abusive behaviours toward young children.

CHAPTER 5 - DENIAL OF RESPONSIBILITY

Abram: Thoughts about having sex with children are not good. When I heard such things in court, I was shocked and very scared. When they showed me the TV monitor, there was nothing I could say, because she is a small child and I can't just argue with a small child. I just accepted it because what would I say, what would I talk about with a small child? If I try talking in court, such an old man, can my penis really penetrate a small child like that? It was as if I am insulting the court. So I realised that I could not proceed with the case, I must just accept. I accepted it and its okay. I am here now.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores perpetrators' justifications for their sexual abuse of young children and the underlying explanations they draw on to understand how they made sense of sexual abuse of young children. During data analysis, it emerged that perpetrator narratives were dominated by attempts to shift responsibility either by complete denial or conditional acceptance of the offence. Researchers (Kenny and Grubin, 1992; Langevin, 1988) report that the line between denial and admission becomes blurred and that this confirms that denial of an offence need not be all-or-none, that is, either categorical denial or complete admission. Similarly, Happel and Auffrey (1995) stated that incarcerated sex offenders are rarely honest about their offending behaviour and that they usually deny responsibility and minimize the harmful impact of their abusive behaviour. As shall be shown later in this chapter perpetrator narratives of denial illustrated what Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle (2011, p. 1-9) referred to as Machiavellian egocentricity, a common trait amongst sexually violent men, which manifests itself in blame externalisation.

Statements of denial were made by most of the participants at the beginning of the interviews and were unprompted. These statements were often used by some of the perpetrators to present themselves as ‘victims of circumstance’ and ‘victims of others’ design. Circumstances, around which a sexual offence occurs, including family, financial and social context of the accused, determine to a greater extent whether the accused would fully or partially accept or deny the offence (see also Lord and Willmot, 1999; O’Donohue and Letourneau, 1993). The stated circumstances became overpowering social motivations which according to Stevenson, Castello and Sefarbi (1989) made the denial of a sexual offence more complex especially when the offence was committed against a very young child. Therefore, during this study denial narratives became a useful entry point into perpetrators’ world view.

The sections in this chapter addresses denial of responsibility through an exploration of categorical denial of the offence, the choreography of denial showing perpetrator manoeuvres between denial and admission of responsibility; perpetrator’s shifting of responsibility to others, perpetrator’s shifting of responsibility to conditions in his environment; perpetrator’s claims for loss of control; and perpetrator’s denial of planning.

5.2. “I DID NOT DO IT”

The perpetrators in this study all reported denying responsibility for child abuse repeatedly, for example, immediately after the offence was committed, during the trial and up to and during the interviews. Of the twenty seven perpetrators who were convicted for sexual abuse of young children fourteen categorically denied committing the offence during interviews and argued that they were falsely accused¹⁸. They mostly stated that false

¹⁸South Africa has a very low conviction rate for crime in general and mainly for sexual offences (Dawes, Borel-Saladin and Parker, 2004). The report by the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) found that across South Africa in the year 2000, only 5% of adult rape cases and 9% of child rape cases reported to

accusations have become a common practice “*because most of the people are imprisoned for what they did not do*” (Aron). For example, Caiphus used the bible to explain that it is not uncommon for people to be falsely accused and convicted:

Caiphus: I cannot accept that I raped because I did not do that. Even in the bible Joseph was arrested for a rape he did not commit. This is just one example but many things are happening here on earth. Even some of us, culprits for being framed, we just have to forgive those who did this.

In providing explanations for being wrongfully convicted of sexual abuse of young children, most perpetrators adopted a victim stance and blamed others for the incrimination. Their narratives suggested feelings of helplessness due to the power they claimed women have over them. They claimed in their narratives that if there were family differences, some women often use these powers to get back at men by using children to make false rape allegations in order to get men into trouble. This is illustrated in the following extract:

Theo: It's the same as...you know that in a village...if I have a wife and she is gone, let me give you an example, and I am left with my daughters at home. What I will do is I will take my daughters to my mother so that she could look after them. I will remain with my sons and I can look after them. Why do I do that? I know that it's possible that this woman might coach the children and tell them 'go and report your father, make a rape allegation against

SAPS resulted in convictions and that 68% of adult cases and 58% of children cases reported to the police did not reach the court. Most of these cases were withdrawn as a result of intimidation of victim by perpetrator, fear of unsupportive partner or parent's reaction to the disclosure, or because the police have persuaded the victim to withdraw the charges either because the evidence is weak. (SALRC, 2000). Taking these factors into consideration, the wrongful accusations which end up in convictions for sexual offences though not impossible, are therefore unlikely.

your father'. I will then get arrested... It happens sometimes in a family that if you have differences with your wife, she might use a child to get you into trouble.

In some cases the men stated that jealousy was another motivation for using children to falsely incriminate a person for child sexual abuse.

Titus: People are framed...okay I and my family and the relatives had differences but I can't say it's a big thing. They had those differences and I didn't know about it when I went there. I had to push my mother to tell me. It's like jealousy. There are only girls in that family and I believe that there should be a bit of a mix, a girl and a boy and so on. I am a brilliant child at school and my family is doing well. I think I died ['died' in this context means suffered] for my mother's sins...that's what she told me. I had to pay for that.

Narratives in this section illustrate that most of the perpetrators who were in complete denial claimed victimization by others', mainly women. They made assertions that women are untrustworthy and have power which is unfairly used to punish men. They alleged to have been falsely accused and that their accusers manipulated children's naiveté to falsely incriminate men and punish them through imprisonment for differences they had or jealousy. However, as shall be shown in the next section, their narratives illustrated they moved between having and not having agency in the alleged sexually abusive behaviours.

5.3. THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF DENIAL

The blurred lines in denial in this study were complicated by narratives suggesting some level of uncertainty in a minority of cases about whether perpetrators have committed an offence or not, whether it is sexually appropriate or not, and whether it is harmful or not.

The narratives highlight some level of planning which was guided by individual circumstances about whether to disclose, what to disclose and how to disclose it.

5.3.1 “Did I Do It?”

Only one participant of the twenty seven claimed that he was not sure if he actually abused the child. He claimed a lack of awareness of the incident due to being under the influence of drugs when the alleged abuse happened. Although some of the participants did not claim lack of awareness, this explanation, that is, being in a drug induced state, was common amongst other participants. The extract by Zeb captures this view:

Zeb: Roughly, with what happened, I don't know what happened because I was drunk. They (police) said we have come to get you because they said you did one two three. I decided I couldn't say anything because I was drunk the previous day. I was afraid of telling them that I used drugs. I didn't resist and I left with them. I fought to have DNA tests and such things but they said it's not possible. Even now I never got a reason of why it was not possible.

The confusion in denial narratives is more noticeable amongst the other twelve participants who admitted to sexual offences against young children. Their responses highlight a gradual move from complete denial to admission and going back and forth between these positions. However, perpetrator narratives suggest that none of the perpetrators in this study have reached full admission with acceptance of responsibility.

Some perpetrators' narratives illustrate they experienced anxiety when they had to disclose and/or admit to the offence. Five participants disclosed during the interviews that they initially denied committing the offence. They reported being overwhelmed by fear, guilt

and embarrassment at that time and lying seemed appropriate for self-preservation. Nathan's narrative illustrates this point as follows:

K: What made you deny it the first time they told you what you did?

Nathan: I was afraid. It was an embarrassing thing to me and to my family because I was thinking about my family at home and what they would say, and people I grew up with, and parents. But after that I accepted it and that what I did was wrong and I have to face the consequences in life and tell myself its okay...I have to stand for what I did because no one else would stand for me on what I did.

In many cases those participants who admitted to the offence talked with remorse about how shameful and 'unacceptable' the act is to them and their communities.

Luke: But most of all this thing of raping small children is totally wrong. It's unacceptable even to myself, its wrong, its wrong, wrong. I have regretted many times for doing such a thing. It's a disgrace to yourself and to your community, it's a disgrace.

Some of the men's narratives illustrate that embarrassment associated with child sexual abuse encouraged maintenance of secrecy about the abuse incident. For example, Ruben said: "*Actually I kept that as a secret, I didn't tell anybody*".

Furthermore perpetrator narratives illustrate that secrecy was also maintained to avoid punishment through lies in some cases. However, some perpetrators' accounts suggest they knew when lying would not work and made decisions to take responsibility for their actions. One participant's narrative (presented below) suggests he changed positions and moved between denial and admission in a short space of time by firstly presenting an injured baby to parents, lying about the cause of injuries, and immediately retracting the lie

and acknowledging that he raped the baby. Raphael (19) reported he sexually abused an eighteen month old baby when he was 15. He said the baby's mother, who was reported to be in a drug induced state, left the baby in his care when he was also in a drug induced state and aroused after being seduced by his friend's girlfriend earlier. He said:

Raphael: *Their reactions...they asked what happened...what have you done now?*

K: *Mm.*

Raphael: *Tell me what happened to the child? Why is she crying? First I told them I fell with the child but then I said no I didn't fall down with the child this and this I did this and this. I have raped the girl.*

As shall be shown later in this chapter, much as he communicated acknowledgement for his actions, like other perpetrators Raphael excused his actions by externalising blame. Avoidance of disclosure could be explained by the admission by perpetrators that they mostly found it embarrassing and hard to talk about the offence openly with others. Some of the participants who reported being open about their offending status emphasised that other child sex offenders have a tendency to distort details of the offence, mainly the age of the child often claiming their victims were their girlfriends to make it appear less disgraceful. Nathan's extract illustrates this point:

Nathan: *Mm. if you find someone who talks about it, you are lucky. Most of them say they had sex with their girlfriends. If you ask how old she is, he would just say, "hey man she is this and this". He would create a person and not the real one. He fabricate some years. He would say it's his girlfriend...and they were drunk. Once he says it's his girlfriend, you search for information before you talk to him. When you talk to him you have to bring some information and tell him that you know what he was convicted for. Tell him to stop playing games. Once you say that, you caught him out. If you just go straight to him the way you*

came to me, you won't get anything. There are very few people who would tell you that they were convicted for raping small children... The reasons for that are that this is an embarrassment. It's embarrassing. If you are about 24 and you come in here. When they ask you what you have been convicted for, it becomes very difficult to say what his crime is. For me it was hard but I ended up saying that I was convicted for raping Kate who is six...

Men in this study asserted that offenders are often treated unfairly by the police and justice system. This was one of the other explanations used to externalise blame and alter the victim's age. Jeremiah's (28) extract captures this reality. Although he denied the offence, he refuted details about his alleged victim's age claiming that the police have a tendency to implicate men with false evidence.

K: *How old was the child?*

Jeremiah: *Four.*

K: *Records say she is two.*

Jeremiah: *She was four, she was a bit older.*

K: *Do you know her?*

Jeremiah: *Yes.*

K: *Can she talk?*

Jeremiah: *Yes she can talk but not that much. It happens sometimes that they might write two or three. They do that because...police have a tendency of exaggerating. They might say you had AK47 when you didn't and you have to make a plan to say where it is even though its not there. Like now I know that the child is four and they reduced it.*

Raphael's victim (18 months) is the youngest within this group of perpetrators (Raphael was 15 at the time of the offence and his victim was 18 months old). At her age she was physically and linguistically vulnerable and not aware of what was happening to her. His

narrative suggests he was embarrassed by his abusive acts on the baby by first denying knowledge about her age and gradually positioning himself as uncertain by providing a tentative disclosure when follow up questions were asked:

K: How old was the child?

Raphael: This child...really I don't know.

K: I mean the one you were keeping for this woman?

Raphael: I don't know how old she was.

K: Plus minus?

Raphael: I know it's in my file.

K: One two three, around?

Raphael: Yeah, I think it's about one year and a half.

5.3.2 “I did... but I didn't see anything wrong”

Although some of the perpetrators were embarrassed about sexual abuse of young children, others were not. What they said illustrated that they admitted to the offence but two argued that sex with children is not inappropriate. Two men (Phil and Javan) who alleged childhood sexual abuse around the same ages (five and six respectively) as their victims, did not seem to be embarrassed by sexual acts with children and did not perceive their acts as abusive. Phil (who was aged 60 at the time of the interview) provided contradictory statements about how he made sense of sexual abuse of young children. He disclosed making a conscious effort to ensure sexually abusive acts between himself and his children are kept as a secret from his first wife. He referred to sexually abusive acts as a ‘play’, a term common amongst some of the perpetrators in this study. Despite being secretive about the abuse, he and Javan (aged 86), did not see their sexually abusive acts as problematic:

Phil: *No, we had a good relationship. Sometimes there were some nights they would come and wake me up. I was sleeping with my wife there and they would come and wake me up to play with them.*

K: *They said daddy come and let's play?*

Phil: *Yeah.*

K: *And you will leave her?*

Phil: *Yeah. Sometimes they would do it together you know. Maybe the first born with the third born, they would do it. But they always do it when I am there and I can keep a watch on my wife so that my wife doesn't catch them.*

Both Javan and Phil were among the oldest participants in this group. They both admitted to abusing more than one victim and deemed their behaviours as not inappropriate. These narratives suggested that for some of these men sexual acts with young children do not constitute an abuse of power. This was because they claimed the acts to be consensual. Their narratives implied that sexual acts were part of a good relationship with these children.

However, some participants' narratives illustrated acknowledgement of abusive acts. Furthermore, the narratives suggested that they may have not understood that what they did was inappropriate. However, it is not clear whether they made such claims in order to absolve themselves from the responsibility. The claims for lack of understanding were common amongst most perpetrators, but more specifically amongst those who reported growing up without fathers or mothers including Luke (28), Nathan (24) and Felix (37). To this Felix said "*It's just that I didn't get guidance from a parent*". Their narratives illustrated blame externalisation as they claimed they had no one to advise them about manhood due to lack of role models (Nathan, Luke and Felix). Nathan said:

Nathan: ... I was saying to myself 'this thing, why didn't I think that I might be arrested'. It occurred to me on Sunday after that person told me.

K: You didn't think about it before then?

Nathan: No, the thought was not there.

K: So, you didn't see it as something wrong when you were doing it?

Nathan: I didn't see anything wrong.

5.3.3 “What I did wasn’t that bad” ... “I did not penetrate them”.

In some cases perpetrators admitted to the offence but their narratives suggested denial of impact as they often overlooked the complex consequences of abusive behaviours. Those who stated they did not penetrate the children claimed they were considerate, that is, being ‘mindful’ not to physically hurt the children. They indicated that their actions were not harmful to children by suggesting a lack of penetration meant there was no physical harm. Javan expressed this as follows:

Javan: ... They do that. This means he penetrated her with force. Yeah, he forced it in. If I also forced it in, I would have torn them apart. But I was mindful about that and I just put the head in. I just held the head in and it could smell the aroma and I was relieved. With the other one, since I couldn't do both of them at the same time, I just smeared her a bit.

According to Gavey (2005, p. 38) false beliefs such as “forced sex is not rape unless it is accompanied by physical violence” are often used to justify rape and excuse perpetrators. This point is further illustrated in the following extract which suggests that to some perpetrators sexual violence must involve overt physical force and physical resistance:

K: How do you perceive yours with your children?

Phil: *It's the same because why...you know, for me is I never penetrated them like they say rape is rape you know. That's the one thing I will never do. I don't know why but that's one thing in my mind I will never do. But on the other stuff for me, it was...it's a fantasy to play with them. It's something like that.*

Most of the participants' narratives illustrated that although they downplayed their positions of power and the impact of abuse on children, they also diverted attention away from victim focus to the negative impact the offence had on them. Some of them did not believe that their actions were harmful to an extent that would have warranted a harsh punishment:

Hebron: *I said I want the court to forgive me please and not give me a hard sentence that I am not supposed to get...I told my self, no, why life imprisonment. At least I can accept ten years because what I did wasn't that bad.*

However, others suggested they were aware of the potential to hurt children but claimed they were considerate by stopping attempts to penetrate when the children said they were hurting, or when they observed the discomfort in children. Felix's narrative illustrate that although perpetrators claimed to be responsive to their victims' complaints about pain he, like some of the men in this study, did not stop until his desire was satisfied. He said:

Felix: *I tried to do on her but I found that she got hurt... I tried and I then thought of doing on her thighs.*

K: *Did she cry?*

Felix: *Yeah, she said 'eish, you are hurting me!'*

K: *You then went for the thighs?*

Felix: *Yeah.*

K: Did she keep quiet?

Felix: She was quiet but at some point she asked what I was doing to her when I was attempting to penetrate her thighs.

K: Did you respond to her?

Felix: Hey, I answered and told her 'I am playing with you'. I then finished and then a thought came to me about what I did. I poured water in the basin to wash my face.

The narratives of perpetrators illustrate that they said they lied and made excuses about their behaviour to protect themselves from embarrassment and punishment. Most men in this study reported shifting positions from lying about the abuse to suggesting it might have not happened, claiming lack of understanding, minimising the impact of the abuse on the children and claiming to be victims suggesting the punishment they received was severe.

Furthermore, the choreography in their narratives illustrated that some were aware that what they did was abusive. In other words, they may have understood that rules are there but could not make sense of why they are there and how they impact on their behaviour. As a result, they evaded the rules because they may not understand that sexual acts with young children are abusive behaviour.

5.4 “I DID IT, THEY CAUSED IT!”

In many cases perpetrators' narratives highlight consistent effort to suggest that they could not have committed such acts without being pushed by forces beyond their control. Furthermore, their statements suggest they were not responsible for sexually abusing young children and if they accept the responsibility, they often share the blame with others. The narratives suggested they were not fully taking responsibility for their actions as they apportioned greater responsibility by blaming the government, mothers, wives and the young children.

5.4.1 Blaming the government

One participant blamed the government for failing to make available rehabilitation programmes for troubled youth to avert future offending. Hebron reported that he attempted to sexually abuse his niece (who was aged 5 at the time of the abuse). He reported losing his mother at two, being physically, emotionally and sexually abused during childhood. He said he started being rebellious, engaging in criminal acts including sexual violence against girls and women early in life. The following extract by Hebron illustrates how he used government's alleged lack of intervention to explain sexual offending later in his life:

Hebron: I was asking him, years and years back I was asking ... The court...Yeah, since I was a boy, you go into this child court isn't it, I was asking them, send me away somewhere...To get help for this problem I've got... I asked, 'listen, send me away man, give me help, I want help because you are going to send me to jail, you are going to make me worse...

Perpetrators in this study often claimed being unfairly treated by the authorities. Most of the men who made claims of false accusations gave examples of a perceived miscarriage of justice during their trials by police, prosecutors and judges, as explained earlier in this chapter. Some of the explanations they used to make excuses for sexual abuse of young children include arguments that the new government allows women and children to abuse their rights by upholding their testimony and denying men opportunities to defend themselves. Furthermore, some asserted that the government is more punitive towards men whereas the apartheid government did not punish men for child sexual abuse in the past. Interestingly, one perpetrator's narrative suggested that the alleged lack of sanction for law

and order in black communities during the Apartheid era condoned sexual acts with children. Javan's narrative suggests that, based on patriarchal practices he alleged to have been raised in, his behaviour was never stopped as it was allegedly not problematic in his past. He lives in a rural village managed by the tribal authority. The village headman has a responsibility to preside over minor disputes in the village. He argued that it would have been acceptable to him for the tribal authority, the perceived appropriate authority (male dominated and favouring men), to preside over the matter and give him a choice to either pay a fine or marry the children he sexually abused. Being arrested under the laws of the democratic government, the inappropriate authority in Javan's view (a democratic government favouring women) reinforced claims by most of the perpetrators in this study that they are unjustly treated:

Javan: They just didn't want murder and rape. But with these ones, there were supposed to be negotiations because I did not rape them. They caused it. The chiefs were supposed to preside on this matter and decide on a fine for me.

K: It was not supposed to go to the police?

Javan: Yes... I should be given an option to either pay or marry and say they are my wives. I respected them, I did not penetrate them, and I just put the head in like this [showing a tip of his finger] because I was aware of the fact that they were small. But I got ten years. Yeah, the laws have changed now and women are the ones in charge.

This illustrates further how misogynistic some perpetrators were. They failed to see how their behaviours were abusive and tended to exonerate themselves from responsibility by shifting the blame to others.

5.4.2 Blaming women/mothers

Blaming women and mothers for abuse was common in most of the participants' narratives. Some perpetrators claimed to have been falsely accused of sexual abuse of young children whereas others admitted to the offence. An important factor is that in both cases they suggested that the mothers were to blame for the false accusation or for allowing the abuse to happen by neglecting their children. Raphael reported that his own parents separated early during his childhood and that he witnessed his father cheating on his mother, domestic violence by his mother's boyfriend, and was sexually abused by his cousin. He claimed to have been sexually aroused and in a drug induced state at the time of the offence. He therefore blamed the child's mother, who was said to also be in a drug induced state, for leaving her baby in his care. His narrative suggest that he saw himself as an unsuitable carer at that time and therefore could not assume responsibility:

Raphael: I was in my room. She said keep the child I'm coming now just give me two minutes I just want to go to the toilet I'm coming back. And I was keeping her...and I was drunk and that girl [a friend's girlfriend had seduced him earlier] made me feel otherwise...

When I took the child to my mother, the child's mother was dancing, she was dancing there after I commit ...I raped the girl. When I took the girl to my mother I saw that woman was still dancing there hanging all over the people there...even my stepfather, my mother's boyfriend...she was all over my stepfather. When my stepfather asked where his lighter was, she opened ha, ha [imitating a laugh], I don't have it [indicating how she lifted her top]. She takes her T-shirt off. But her husband is in the sitting room.

Raphael claimed that the mother made him sexually abuse the baby even though he mentioned that he was already sexually aroused when the baby was brought to him. The narrative further illustrates the externalisation of blame:

***Raphael:** Yes. When it happened, when I finished to sexually rape the baby, I took the girl and I went to my parents straight, to my mother and that woman was also there. I told this woman 'look at what you have done now, look at what you have made me do now'. She screams 'ah my child has been raped'.*

5.4.3 Blaming the children

Despite the young age of their victims (seven years and below), some perpetrators' narratives suggested that children were capable of seduction and therefore to blame for their abuse. By saying the children '*caused it*', Javan's narrative suggests the children were in a position of power and therefore he, as an adult was exonerated from taking the responsibility for '*agreeing*' to engage in sexual acts with the children. Javan said:

***Javan:** Then they [two six year old girls] said to me, come and sleep with us. I say no I did not say I want to sleep. You are the ones who wanted to sleep. Then those children said come and have sex with us...they actually said it well and said come and fuck us. I said oh...and I also...Satan also...God left me and ...I thought about what they say yeah and I also got into bed. So, when I went to the other one, she said no we start with that one, the one who was holding my bible.*

Further portrayal of children as seducers, (see chapter 7) is demonstrated by suggestions that children asked for sex and that they actively participated in sexual acts. Although Phil's narrative suggests that he blames the children, he communicates this blame in a way that normalized his and the children's behaviours suggesting that the sexual acts occurred within a '*good relationship*' (see 5.3.2) he had with his children even though he explained that he groomed children to see sexually abusive acts as play.

This section has demonstrated how perpetrators diminished their own agency in abusive acts. They did this by suggesting the powerful agency of others including government, mothers, and children. Their narratives suggest they believe they were failed by government, falsely accused, unfairly judged and seduced into sexually abusive acts with children.

5.5 “I DID IT, I HAD AN URGE”

Perpetrator narratives of denial did not only shift responsibility away from them to others but to other forces beyond their control. They alleged these forces overpowered them leading to failure in preventing the abuse. They mostly suggested that they sexually abused young children in response to an uncontrollable sexual urge. Some of the perpetrators reported they often had triggers¹⁹ of violent sexual arousal and alleged that these triggers were caused by their own history of childhood sexual abuse. Nathan reported having been sexually abused by a woman in his neighbourhood when he was 12. Although he blamed his childhood abuse and watching pornography for his arousal, he later said he did not know why he sexually abused the child. He said:

Nathan: At that time, I was thinking of so many things but I was longing for having sex with someone.

K: You were longing?

Nathan: Yeah. I have violent sexual urge... I become violently aroused.

K: What does that mean?

Nathan: I become heavily aroused. But now I am able to do self-talk. On that day, I was watching Emmanuelle the whole night. I didn't even know how to masturbate. I then did

¹⁹ Participants explained triggers to mean a stimulus that sets off sexual desire followed by sexually abusive action aimed at sexual gratification.

this when I woke up... I cannot say because...right now I am able to say this to you, but that is what happened on that day. Maybe it's a long story that I am unable to tell about why I couldn't control myself...I am still trying to find out what went wrong at that time. Why didn't I control myself? I ask myself this very question 'why didn't you?'

This narrative illustrates claims by some of the men in this study that men cannot stop themselves once they are sexually aroused. However, other explanations were offered to address loss of control. Although some of the men said they were sober at the time of the offence, the others reported being under the influence of substances when the offence was committed. They often blamed addictive substances alleging that their abuse of addictive substances had led to failure to reason as they were in a drug induced state at the time of the abuse:

Hebron: *I spiked a couple of shots and smoked rocks and sniffed two lines of coke, came out. It's just there where the problem started. It was a whole drug situation. You can call it a drug situation because it was a drug situation because it was alcohol, drugs, it was heroin, it was coke... Yeah, I lost my mind. ...Now, I don't know what triggered me there because this is just the story that I know. Because if you are on drugs and stuff, you do things that you don't realise actually what you are doing.*

Raphael's narrative illustrates this further:

Raphael: *I was under the influence of alcohol and I didn't, it's like I sort of...you get a blackout; you don't know what you are doing. You can see your body is moving but you can't control it...I didn't know what to do I was...my mind was overtaking my body. I couldn't control myself. Even my bed was full of blood because I hurt myself and the*

baby... In my mind, I was...its like I see the baby but I can't control myself I can't control my mind. It's like my mind takes over. I was even biting myself. I tried to bite myself.

This drug induced state is illustrated further by Ruben, 36, who acknowledged responsibility and was remorseful for sexually abusing his four year old son:

Ruben: *Drugs can...especially with rocks and cocaine, they affect your brain inside. That's why I say that the mind was gone but you can feel the body inside, it's not your body, it's like you are floating, everything is standing still inside... To be honest with you, what I did was a mistake... Since I left those things, and my memory started coming back, I realised that I made a big, big, huge mistake.*

Substance abuse could be regarded as a plausible explanation for loss of control in some cases and as illustrated above some participants used this to excuse their abusive behaviour. Although some participants allegedly used addictive substances as an excuse for loss of control, other perpetrator narratives suggested that perpetrators often make a conscious decision to take addictive substances to remove inhibitions. One participant said “*I will have no conscience*” (Zeb) after drug use. This claim suggest that some people use addictive substances to be brave to do what they intended to do prior to being under the influence of substances. Steve who reported being sober at the time of the offence illustrated the intentional use of substances for bravery:

Steve: *They say they want to have pluck. They are afraid...He couldn't tell himself that the child is too small. You can say that yourself if you didn't smoke. Once you smoke, there is no self talk. You don't control yourself anymore. It feels like there is a high speed tussle in your tummy.*

Participants, who said they acted on impulse, suggested that exercising restraint when under the influence of substances is difficult because alcohol impairs their judgement and self-control. However, some perpetrator narratives attributed their loss of control to other forces. These forces seemed unrelated to whether the perpetrator was sober or not. Javan (archbishop in his own church) and Zeb used religion to externalise blame to forces beyond their control. By so doing Javan portrayed himself as powerless and claimed that God left him exposed to the evil spirit which made him engage in abusive acts:

Javan: I also...Satan also...God left me and ...I thought about what they say yeah and I also got into bed. So, when I went to the other one, she said no we start with that one, the one who was holding my bible. Ah, what can I say, it's Satan. What puts us in the wrongs we all do it's the evil spirits.

This point is illustrated further by Zeb's narrative which also highlights out of body experiences described by a few of the men (Raphael, Ruben and Hebron) in this study:

Zeb: sometimes after taking drugs, you would feel like having a woman or maybe you crave for sex or have some evil spirit's according to the bible, Satan's evil spirits, roughly, I don't know if you believe in the bible, Satan does not want you to do the right thing. When you tell yourself that you are doing the right thing, he will come and make you do bad things and it's only after doing a bad thing that you would start questioning why you did it. That is why you find that most people wouldn't even want to make you struggle. They would just confess and say I did it. If you ask why he did it he would say he doesn't know he just saw it happen.

Thus many perpetrators diminished their own agency in abusive acts. Although a few men felt accountable for their actions, some of them had no such feelings. Those who

diminished their responsibility claimed that the powerful agency of forces beyond their control were responsible, featuring ‘uncontrollable’ sexual, biological drives, drugs and Satan who allowed or provoked what their mind would not have chosen to do otherwise. By claiming loss of control most of the perpetrators narratives suggest, as illustrated in the next section, the acts were impulsive and not planned.

5.6 “I DID NOT PLAN IT”.

Another dimension of denial is illustrated by a tendency by most participants in this study to claim there was no premeditation for sexual abuse of young children. They claimed they acted impulsively when aroused and when an opportunity presented itself through availability of an unsupervised child. Emmanuel’s narrative suggests that control of sexual arousal depends on the level of the man’s desire to satisfy his sexual urge and whether it is safe to abuse the child without being detected. His narrative suggested that when a child acts ‘seductively’ in front of a man (see chapter 7), she is asking for sex and should get it. The narrative illustrates that although perpetrators often manipulate children by grooming them and their environment to isolate them from carers, they do not interpret that as deliberate planning. Emmanuel’s narrative suggests loss of control happens when the abuser finds himself alone with the child illustrating denial of planning. However, his explanation also illustrated a contradiction when he said perpetrators would not lose control when children are supervised:

K: So does that mean if a man finds himself around a child, he could control himself?

Emmanuel: Eish...but that one...those children were naked sister and they were playing with their private parts.

K: They are children.

Emmanuel: *Yes they are children. But sister look, that person has locked the door, the door is closed and people from outside can't see anything...he is the only one with the children...*

That man cannot control himself because no one can see him.

K: *If someone can see him?*

Emmanuel: *If someone can see him, he will control himself. It's the same with what I did. I didn't control myself because there was no one.*

K: *You didn't control yourself because there was no one?*

Emmanuel: *Yes. If there was someone, I would have exercised restraint, you see.*

Some of the perpetrators narratives illustrated that, although they claimed that their actions were spontaneous, there was often some level of planning to isolate the child. Stephen's narrative suggests his actions were aimed at serving his own sexual interests. It also highlights the deliberate intentions he had to create an opportunity to lure an unsupervised child by isolating her from her friend to ensure privacy:

Steve: *I watched the pornography CD and then I became aroused. I called her and raped her...She was playing with another child, a little boy who lives with my grandmother. I called the boy, gave him some money and sent him to buy Simba chips [crisps].*

K: *Did you plan this before or how did you happen to choose this one?*

Steve: *No, I just saw her there.*

K: *What made you choose her?*

Steve: *I told them I want to send them on an errand and that one stayed behind and said she will wait for the boy... I just went to her because she was nearby.*

K: *If there was someone else?*

Steve: *I wouldn't have called her.*

K: *What would you have done?*

Steve: I would have just left it.

Despite consistent denial of planning, some of the narratives suggest that perpetrators engage in subtle activities with children to desensitize them. These activities encourage the children to befriend the perpetrator so that when he/she decides to sexually abuse them, the children should be more receptive to sexual acts. Javan's narrative illustrates this point. His narrative further suggests it was not unusual for him to have unsupervised interactions with the children. As a result, what he said suggests when boundaries were blurred he could not recognise that he was put in a position of trust as an adult and an archbishop and that his abusive behaviour was inappropriate. Instead the children's presence reminded him of their statement "come and fuck us", which he claims they used to shout to him when he passed in the streets, and he saw an opportunity to act:

K: Besides calling you when you passed on the road, did they ever come to the house before?

Javan: They used to come.

K: They talk about this?

Javan: No, they never talked about this. All they did was to ask for money, fifty cents.

K: They used to come and you gave them money?

Javan: Yes, to buy fat cakes at school.

K: The first time they came to you, were they alone?

Javan: They used to come and spent some time at home in the evenings...with me.

K: Where they coming alone?

Javan: Yes, they used to come on their own.

K: Did their parents know that they were coming here?

***Javan:** Yes, they knew that the children come here until Satan got inside me. It became a habit and the children got used to me and ...what they think...what they used to say to me when I was passing through the streets.*

Some of the perpetrators illustrate that some level of planning, at different levels took place to ensure there was no interruption during the abuse and detection afterwards. An equally significant aspect in their planning was grooming which involved the use of gifts, bribes and games to lure children. Abram denied sexually abusing his friend's five year old stepdaughter. His narrative captures the dynamics of grooming:

***K:** How does that end up encouraging sex with children?*

***Abram:** Isn't it children have a tendency to crave for a lot of things from adults and you find that they would say brother Abram buy us some sweets and so on. They easily get tempted by things like sweets and so on, chocolates, stuff, Simba chips [potato crisps]. They know that uncle Abram is coming I should go and wait for him over there. All these nice things. You will find that this child likes playing at your place and you find that your mind, eyes and thoughts, you're thinking about bad things. You tell yourself that this child loves me, if I could just hold her a bit.*

At the extreme end of the continuum in denial of planning are perpetrators who admit to making a deliberate decision to plan for grooming and the sexual abuse of young children. In this study, only one perpetrator, out of all the 27 participants, admitted to planning the abuse of all his five daughters. Phil's narrative illustrates how he isolated his children from their mothers. He explained that he abused four daughters in his first marriage and his only daughter in the second marriage. In his narrative he admits to meticulous planning in committing the offences, making decisions about which child he wanted to engage in a

sexual act with, often making them jealous to compete for participation in their abuse, and how to divert his first wife's attention to avoid getting caught.

Phil: Yeah, I will call her to my room or I will go to her room or see where my wife is...how the situation is, you know.

K: You assess the safety?

Phil: Yeah or I will go to the garage. I've got a double garage with big windows, I can stand on that side and see the whole lounge where my wife is sitting on the coach. I would just...it just clicks in my mind and I would do it.

K: From what you have told me, it's like you were always thinking about...planning about it when you were at home.

Phil: 99% I was planning on that.

K: You were planning about it?

Phil: 99%... Sometimes I will give my wife a sleeping pill if I want to do it at that time of the night...from ten o'clock in the night.

K: Mm. So you were now planning it?

Phil: Yeah, I started planning what I wanted to do. You know the children are getting bigger, you start getting the other one also involved.

K: When you say you started getting the other children involved, were you doing it with one at a time or?

Phil: In the beginning one at a time yeah. My first born, she was the one I did with for quite a while.

The participant's account suggests that child sexual abuse may involve manipulation of not only the victim but caregivers as well. Phil's narrative shows that he used means within his power to normalise sexually abusive acts with his children. His narrative illustrate the deception in the abovementioned extract and how he encouraged his second wife and

daughter to pose for indecent pictures giving them an impression they are doing it 'just for a picture'. He not only manipulated his family, by stating 'it was a family thing,' but minimised the impact of what he did to the children:

Phil: So, as the kid was lowering her pants, we started doing it and I told my wife she must kiss it, my kid's privates, just for a picture you know. I was always saying just for a picture.

K: Oh, you were using the camera to make them do what you want as if they are posing?

Phil: Yeah, as if they are posing. And in the meantime I know I taught them and they get used to it.

The data in this section illustrated perpetrators' denial of responsibility which manifested in the denial of planning. The findings illustrated that although most of the perpetrators claimed that their sexually abusive acts towards young children were often impulsive, there was evidence of subtle planning of sexual abuse of young children as well. Furthermore, assertions that it was possible to control the 'uncontrollable' sexual urge if it was not safe to sexually abuse the child illustrate further that perpetrators planned implicitly or explicitly to carry out abusive acts. The evidence further illustrated that the planning process of most abusive acts involve skilful manipulation of both victims, carers and their environment. The narratives have also shown that luring children into abusive acts often involve the use of bribes and desensitization to make children receptive to sexually abusive behaviour. Thus the data evidenced that perpetrators abused power to manipulate their victims and that when boundaries were blurred perpetrators did not interpret the abusive circumstances as harmful and problematic for children.

Perpetrators mostly diminished their own agency in abusive acts by suggesting the powerful agency of forces beyond their control were responsible, featuring drugs, pornography and Satan. However, the contradictions within their narratives demonstrated

their interest in engaging in sexual acts with children, and their agency in the way they skilfully manipulated the children and the environment, though not always planned, to allow abuse to happen. Assertions that it was possible to control the sexual urge if it was not safe to sexually abuse the child illustrate further that perpetrators planned implicitly or explicitly to carry out abusive acts out of self-interest disregarding the harmful impact of their acts on their victims.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and analysed narratives of perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children which illuminate how they make sense of sexual acts with young children. The analysis focused mainly on denial of responsibility of a sexual offence as an entry point in understanding perpetrator explanations about sex with young children. From the analysis of findings it emerged that acknowledging that a sexually inappropriate act has been committed and taking responsibility for it was more complicated than just admission or disavowing of an offence. The data has shown that in denying responsibility perpetrators often refute the allegation often engaging in deception of others and the self. The data has also shown that none of the perpetrators in this study completely accepted their responsibility for sexually abusing young children as their narratives indicated a continuous shift in position between denial and admission. These explanations included lying for fear of embarrassment associated with admission of guilt; failure to see sexually abusive behaviour as inappropriate; failure to acknowledge the possible harmful impact of child sexual abuse; and claiming a lack of insight in order to portray themselves as victims. Perpetrators' narratives illustrated that they often externalise blame suggesting they were victims of others' design or circumstances beyond their control to reduce their culpability in the offence.

A more significant finding was that in externalising blame they also blamed their young victims for their sexually abusive behaviours. Although most of the participants have allegedly acted on impulse to abuse children, the data illustrated the abuse of power, manipulation, subtle planning and grooming by some with one admission of overt planning for sexual abuse. This involved in some case manipulation of carers and peers. What participants did was to choreograph their narratives to be able to shift between socially acceptable meanings and personally acceptable meanings to distance themselves from any sexually inappropriate behaviour.

These findings suggest tentatively the following conclusions. None of the perpetrators in this study, including those who were about to be released, provided full admission with acceptance of responsibility. Denial “is not an all-or-none phenomenon but rather a complex, multifaceted construct” (Schneider and Wright, 2001, p. 7). It is complicated by many factors at both individual and societal levels. The difference between denial and insight was not always clear in the narratives. Furthermore, the denial narratives were characterised by contradictory and fragmentary explanations. What this chapter has illustrated is that perpetrators, like any other person, rely on justifications to make sense of accusations levelled against them including sexual abuse of young children. For their justifications to be effective they used cultural and political explanations drawn from their everyday lives. They construct dominant stories such as “*women are now in charge*” or “*I have violent arousals*” or “*I can’t control myself I can’t control my mind*” to diminish their agency and adopt a victim stance to convince themselves and others that abuse did not happen or it was not their fault or it was not inappropriate. The next chapter addresses further the use of these explanations which legitimate sexual violence and could be referred to as the “building blocks” of what the radical feminists called a “rape culture” (Gavey (2005, p. 37).

CHAPTER 6 – SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT TO SEX

Jasper: It's self-control and not living well, having problems and not having a partner. Wherever a man is...he should have his partner who would be able to satisfy him with everything, not depriving you of what you want because if you miss something, blood surges to the head. There should be someone to cool you down to make things better.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores how perpetrators make sense of sexual abuse of young children through their explanations of a sense of entitlement to sex. In their talk about sex with young children, perpetrators in this study used ways of accounting for themselves in the world by positioning themselves as men. Not only did they position themselves as men, but men as patriarchal figures within the family and in so doing they used a range of ways to assert their power over women and children.

In explaining why some men sexually abuse young children, most of these perpetrators in this study used narratives highlighting their beliefs in the ideology of patriarchy. They justified their actions by talking about a man's entitlement to sex as a right. These narratives suggested they use rape beliefs in their everyday language to justify sexual violence and to further suggest that these beliefs are integrated in society as a way of constructing issues about sexuality. Similarly, Stermac and Dafoe (2009, p. 11) stated that these beliefs "have become so widespread that they actually function as social norms". In a South African study (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junius, 2005, p. 1814) participants described a widely held belief that men have an uncontrollable sexual urge and that once aroused they have to have sex. In this study perpetrators' use of rape beliefs served the

purpose of justifying the use of any means including sexual violence to access what they claim to be their sexual rights and privileges.

This chapter describes what perpetrators say about their relationships with and their attitudes to adult women for three reasons. Firstly, they often conflate the words women and children in their narratives. Secondly, their narratives illustrate they often gave the young children they sexually abused the status of adult women (see chapter 7). Thirdly, they use relationships with adult women to make sense of sexual abuse of young children. This chapter presents and discusses the following assertions made by perpetrators : that men are superior and women and children are possessions; perpetrators' belief that men have an uncontrollable sexual urge and are entitled to sex as and when they want it; explanations about entitlement which justify man's 'need' to have multiple sexual partners; a sense of sexual entitlement based on gifting or offering bribes; the use of violence against women who deny men access to sex; and men's frustrations about women's rights as obstacles for sexual entitlement.

6.2 YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO LISTEN TO A WIFE...A WOMAN IS A CHILD

Some participants' narratives suggest they have been taught that men are superior to women and therefore should be in charge of caring for and controlling them as their possessions. They further illustrate that some of these men view women as inferior and incapable of being socially and economically responsible. Jasper denied abusing his neighbour's daughter aged approximately five years old. He asserted that women and children are different from, and not as good as men:

Jasper: *I think they are alright. They [women] just need care and protection because the man is supposed to care for a woman. When you take her from her home, you are supposed to protect her, she is a child, you must protect her. Even when my wife was working I didn't want her money. I would say to her 'mama, use your money to buy whatever you want. I am a man. When I proposed to you I said I will be able to care for you, so I will'. That is how I dealt with rent and everything. If I give her money, I wouldn't want it back. That's what my parents taught me. I would rather ask from friends if I need money.*

K: *Tell me more about what you said. You said according to you a woman is a child.*

Jasper: *I am saying a woman is a child as compared to a man because a woman admires a lot of things and she makes a lot of mistakes. A man should sit down and think things through and deprive himself of a lot of niceties, and look at how far things go and what the future holds.*

This point is further illustrated in Zeb's narrative which claims that the belief that women should not have a say in their homes is a tradition that is handed down from one generation to the other and therefore should be upheld:

Zeb: *I can't say that it's up to him sister, our fathers were using different rules, that you are not supposed to listen to a wife and so on. I remember after moving out of my parents' home in January 1999, after getting a plot. I asked my uncle who is a traditional healer, to do some rituals to strengthen my home. He came and did some rituals and then said to me a wife must never wake up before you in the morning. He also said no food must leave the family home after 6pm. A woman must not go over the fence and so on. He is an old man and he tells me things that he might have experienced and I therefore have to listen to what he said.*

This line of thinking illustrates the entrenched belief in patriarchal ideology by most of the men in this study. Therefore, the democratic changes in South Africa, particularly the legalisation concerning gender equality, in which women make decisions about their lives, threatens male superiority. This is further evidenced by Javan's narrative in which he claims that if a woman says no to sex the 'world is messed up' because mothers during his childhood were never allowed to exercise their sexual rights:

Javan: In families, I am your partner...and you...when I get back from where I visited or work...when I get back and say sex ...you say I am tired I want to rest. You see, the world is messed up. Our fathers when we were growing up, our mothers during her periods, that's the only time when she gets off the bed and sleep on the floor.

Being in control seemed important to most of the participants. In their explanations of the importance of controlling women some of the perpetrators suggested that some women are not trustworthy. They then used these claims, as shall be shown in the next chapter, to suggest women were uncontrollable and unavailable for sex thus justifying sexual abuse of young children. Luke's extract illustrates the view that for some of these men it is problematic when women are perceived as uncontrollable:

Luke: Yeah, I had a problem with Gloria because she used to cheat on me and she was hiding it. I loved her more than others.

Therefore, their narratives illustrate they were suspicious of women who were in control of their lives, often perceiving them to be dishonest and to have malicious objectives towards men. For example Luke positioned himself as a victim of his girlfriend's cheating but did not say anything about the fact that he also had more than one girlfriend despite having disclosed this earlier during the interview. Some of the perpetrator narratives suggest that

those who suspected possible infidelity by their partners used restrictive measures to prevent infidelity by not allowing women to work. This point is illustrated as follows:

Zeb: To tell the truth from my side. I never allowed my partner to work. I did not want a woman who works because I discovered that women who work have a tendency of misbehaving. Most of them misbehave. You find that she says she is going to work and you might find that the boss has to go and make some plans for her to get a job and I had those thoughts.

Furthermore, their desire for control defined ways of initiating intimate relationships with women. In initiating sexual relationships, some perpetrators suggested that men use their talk with women to gauge the level of control required to exert authority over women. Some men like Zeb, who was a taxi driver prior to his arrest, reported using their economic status to show women that they are capable of assuming a role of a provider whilst enticing women for their own sexual gratification:

Zeb: Another thing is the way you communicate you can observe that if you could say one, two, three, I might be welcome in some way. I would then ask where she has to get off and when she tells me I would ask her not to get off and I would take her home. If she doesn't get off it's fine. As long as she listens to what you say it means she will also listen to your story as well.

Although most participants' narratives strongly articulated a dominant masculinity, their explanations shifted, depending on context, to another view which acknowledged women as independent, helpful partners. What was interesting was that the change of position was temporary and context dependent. This suggested that even though a man might want his daughter to be financially independent, he would still hold on to a view that her husband is

superior and that she should as a woman maintain her position of inferiority. Whilst Zeb's narrative illustrated how patriarchal practices of male dominance are handed down to males, what Jasper said illustrated how women are socialised to be subservient to men. Jasper said:

Jasper: The second thing is to avoid asking for money from a man. You must work and be able to help this man. That's what I taught my children. She should not depend on the man financially. Have your own money to make sure you are secure. When the man shouts at you, you must keep quiet.

These narratives demonstrate that perpetrators in this study see themselves as superior to women. They suggest that men have been brought up to be providers and protectors to their wives and children and that this role gives them the authority to dominate and control women and children. Contrary to Jasper's narrative highlighting women's financial independence, other narratives portrayed women as being socially, intellectually and economically weak, requiring care and dependence on men for all aspects of their lives. Furthermore, raising daughters to be subservient suggests a belief by some men in this study, in male dominance against women. Furthermore, the narratives illustrate a lack of trust in women which contributes to the hostility against women who are viewed as a threat to male domination. Denying women financial independence ensures female subordination and maintenance of patriarchal order.

6.3 IF YOU MISS SEX BLOOD SURGES TO THE HEAD

Some of the men in this study suggest they understood sex to be a man's right. They made claims suggesting the biological importance of sex in justifying accessing sex as and when they want it. Some participants' narratives suggested that it is problematic for a man to be

deprived of sex. Jasper claimed that sex has the power to keep men sane, hence the loss of self-control when it is lacking:

Jasper: It's self-control and not living well, having problems and not having a partner. Wherever a man is...he should have his partner who would be able to satisfy him with everything, not depriving you of what you want because if you miss something, blood surges to the head. There should be someone to cool you down to make things better.

Participants claimed that once they are sexually aroused they become helpless and have to have sex to relieve themselves from the painful erection caused by an uncontrollable sexual urge. Some of the men excused their abusive behaviour by claiming that the sexual urge in men is biologically controlled and that only sex with a woman, a girl child or masturbation would cure it. Shepherd's extract illustrates this point further claiming loss of control excuses sexual violence:

Shepherd: So, I feel that I want to release...

K: What forces you?

Shepherd: I can say I am forced by emotions.

K: Where do they come from?

Shepherd: It's the mind...

K: So you are unable to control it?

Shepherd: Eish, I am able to control it but sometimes you can feel that eish, whether you like it or not, there is nothing you can do.

K: You just leave it, your mind?

Shepherd: Not that I leave it, it's just that, you know what, let me tell you, say for instance...maybe men and women...we are not the same. If a man is aroused, feeling that he wants to have sex with a woman, is not easy for his thing to become flaccid without getting

a woman or without masturbation just to discharge, it's not easy. Sometimes when he is aroused, it aches, it becomes painful.

K: *It becomes painful?*

Shepherd: *Yes, it becomes painful. Sometimes when you look at it you will see. What do you call these things? Veins. You will see veins protruding showing that this person is feeling pains, you understand. That's why I say I am forced by the situation to end up making a proposal to another person.*

Although some perpetrators have reported using masturbation to relieve themselves sexually, others claimed they did not know about it. However, two of those who knew about masturbation and claimed not to use it, used the bible as a justification for why it was not an option for them. To some of these men sex has to be between a man and a woman. Javan said:

Javan: *No, That's murder.*

K: *It kills what?*

Javan: *The blood...God made it [penis] to get into a woman and not to...even this thing of sex between men, it's a sin to God...Yeah. Masturbation is a big sin. If we read in the bible, it's just that I was not ready for it.*

Caiphus' narrative illustrated this argument further as follows:

Caiphus: *No, masturbation is not healthy. Even in the book of God, Leviticus 15, if I am not wrong. You don't have to spit your semen on the floor...It's not healthy and it's not religious...both of them.*

Shepherd illustrated the point about health hazards of masturbation but distanced himself from this view:

Shepherd: They dislike masturbation, maybe they have got their own reasons because some of the people they keep on saying masturbation is not right because when you are discharging, you are inhaling the air from outside, and it will also cause some wounds.

K: Wounds?

Shepherd: Mm. Wounds inside the stomach.

K: They say people who masturbate will inhale some air.

Shepherd: When you discharge.

K: How will they inhale it?

Shepherd: Through the penis.

The claims by some participants that they did not know about masturbation and by others that it is an unacceptable, unhealthy and sinful practice illustrate an attempt by some of these men to position themselves as having no option in the absence of consenting adult women to justify sexual abuse of young children. This explanation was used by some participants to excuse their abusive behaviour and also to suggest that their sexual desires are paramount over women and children's rights.

Perpetrator narratives in this study illustrated assertions drawing on biological determinism to justify men's sexual entitlement to sex as and when they want. These narratives were used by some of these men to justify targeting young children when consenting adult women were not accessible for sex. As shall be shown in the next section these excuses were also used to justify having multiple sex partners.

6.4 'TWO POTS ARE DELICIOUS'

Participants' narratives emphasised the importance they placed on unlimited and unrestricted access to sex with adult women. In order to have sex as and when they want, some of the men talked about having more than one sexual partner. Their narratives suggest that their preference for multiple sex partners were aimed at ensuring that their sexual desires are met at all times without taking into consideration their partners' needs. In some cases having multiple sex partners was a way of dealing with inadequacies in intimate relationships with adult women. However, as shall be shown later, some of these multiple adult intimate relationships did not always result in successful access to sex. Instead they resulted in preoccupation with sex which later led to sexual abuse of young children.

Although some men (Javan and Zeb) claimed they had a preference for younger women and boasted of being pursued by women, others (Nathan and Luke) said their partners left them for men who were either younger, smarter or had more money. Javan reported going through both experiences as he lost most of his wives to younger men. Therefore, those whose sexual advances were allegedly rejected (Javan, Steve, Seth and Felix) claimed to have been lonely and yearning for sex, illustrating a subtle plan to abuse despite denial of planning (as discussed in chapter 5). They said when faced with these challenges they took advantage of unsupervised young children to satisfy their sexual desire (see chapter seven). The next two quotes capture the ways in which having more than one sexual partner were seen to guarantee access to sex:

***Javan:** My wife's plan to get another wife for me was for her to be able to go out and I had no clue. I just thought it's my wife. But this one stayed for just three months and left ...but I*

had already realised that oh two pots are delicious because when one is not available you run to the other one. I then proposed to another one.

Besides guaranteed sexual access, one perpetrator's narrative demonstrates that men want more than one partner to avoid monotony in a monogamous relationship. In making a comparison between women and food, one man presented women as commodities to be abused to have variety in men's sexual diet:

Zeb: I used to hear some words from some men I used to work with. They used to say 'you can't eat cabbage everyday'.

Although some men talked about women being untrustworthy, their narratives illustrate they were often not open with their partner about having multiple sex partners. Most of the participants in this study reported that they did not disclose their "affairs" to their wives or live-in partners. They reported that they sometimes informed their mistresses, instructing them to temporarily leave the house, if there were possibilities of being caught by wives and as expected, their mistresses would cooperate, accepting that they are the "other woman" without challenging this practice. Two perpetrators reported that multiple sex partners were legitimized through the practice of polygamy in their families. One man who reported that most of the men in his ethnic group and his family have more than one partner said he thought loving many women at the same time is an inherited family trait:

Zeb: My father had three wives...I asked myself that question when I was still out there, looking at my uncles and my brothers. One day I asked my uncle why most of them...most of them have two to three wives. Even outside the family...you find that...even my father...after he died, so many children emerged from out there who confessed that they came to bury their father. We asked them who they are and they explained. In my family, most of my

brothers also love women and I don't know whether this is hereditary or what. I don't know if they take after my father. Even my uncles, none of them has just one wife. They have two or three. They also have mistresses out there...The Swazis are known...like this man, the King of the Swazis...can you see how he is? It's very rare to find a Swazi man who has only one wife. Most of the men I know have more than one... I think this is hereditary.

Although the narrative above presents polygamy as biologically determined, what is evident is that this cultural practice has existed over generations and is now interpreted as a birth right by some men and used to justify men having multiple sex partners, including mistresses. One man said those who were unable to provide for more than one wife financially, chose to have a wife and extramarital partners to ensure sexual variety, access, and excitement for themselves.

Zeb: *In the past you married more than one and now you marry one but still have others out there.*

These narratives show that some perpetrators are preoccupied with sex and also believe that they are entitled to sex. Furthermore, they use power disparities between men and women which allow and legitimize self-serving multiple sexual relations characterised by non-emotional engagement to ensure unrestricted access to sex whenever they want. The one sided way in which they look at sexual access, variety and enjoyment highlight the double standard in patriarchy which condones deception and privileges male infidelity. The next section illustrates that in the absence of adult women some men engaged in transactional sex with both adult women and young children.

6.5 I SHOWED HER THE MONEY AND ASKED HER TO HAVE SEX WITH ME

Most narratives suggested that perpetrators experienced an uncontrollable sexual urge which allegedly forced them to look for a woman for sex. Some participants talked about exercising control over their sexual desire. Those who made attempts to relieve themselves from the urge reported that the process of finding a woman to have sex with takes time. Their narratives illustrate persistence whilst searching for a target and they said they often lose an erection during the search. Some of the participants in this study claimed that it is abnormal not to have sex for days and that this led to a preoccupation with satisfying a sexual desire ensuring a focused search for a target. Shepherd stated that having money makes the process “simple” as a man does not need to emotionally engage in a relationship to satisfy his sexual desire:

K: Are you saying that all the time during this process, you will be feeling that way?

Shepherd: Isn't it...no...Isn't it there is...you are right it takes long but there are people you'll find at taverns, ah those, are so simple. It's just a matter of having money.

K: At that time you know that at least I am postponing but I am going there.

Shepherd: I am looking at, I actually, according to me, I just want to discharge, and that's my intention, not to say that I love her.

K: So, are you saying that all that time when you get there you go with that intention, feeling that way and it's going to be like that until you achieve your objective?

Shepherd: No, sometimes it might be possible for it to be droopy, you understand, and I could tell myself in my mind that no I must relax and it will become droopy but...

K: ... why don't you tell yourself to relax?

Shepherd: The problem is that you can't tell yourself for a long time. You can't take many days. You can't take many days always telling yourself that it must always be droopy, droopy, droopy every day. You will end up going to look for a person. That's why I say

when it is flaccid, it's when you will go and look for a person so that she could come nearer for you to have sex with her.

Perpetrator narratives illustrated that some of these men engaged in transactional sex. They often talked about using money and other rewards to derive some entitlement for sex not only from women but from children as well. For children these rewards were used for grooming as explained in chapter 5. In some cases perpetrators stated that once they gave a child money or rewards they were entitled to sex. Furthermore, some claimed that if a child asked for and accepted rewards from a man, it implied she loved him. They also interpreted it as willingness by their victims to engage in a sexual act with them. Emmanuel, (aged 17 at the time of the offence) stated his abusive act was his first sexual experience. After watching pornography, he reported being aroused and wanting to practice sexual acts on the child. As an uncle, he said his niece who was approximately 7 years old came to him for rescue after her grandmother threatened to chastise her. His narrative illustrates that he took advantage of her vulnerability and abused his position of trust. Despite her age, what he said shows that he bribed her for sex to satisfy his sexual desire and justified it by saying he paid and she agreed. His narrative illustrates that he and other participants believed that they could engage in transactional sex with children and that it was acceptable to do so. Furthermore, this justification emanates from the belief that a sexual act is not abusive when no force was used (see chapter 5). Emmanuel said:

K: Okay, you said they said you raped. What is rape in your opinion?

Emmanuel: It's vulgar sister.

K: Explain in a way that you understand it so that I could understand how you perceive it.

Emmanuel: It's to sleep [have sex] with a small child sister.

K: What if it's an adult, is it not rape?

Emmanuel: Its rape.

K: *So what is rape?*

Emmanuel: *To force a person who is not willing.*

K: *Is a small child able to say whether she is willing or not?*

Emmanuel: *Yes she is able to.*

K: *How do you know?*

Emmanuel: *I produced money and said lets agree, you see sister. I took out some money and we talked*

K: *With a child?*

Emmanuel: *Yes and we came to an agreement.*

K: *What did you say to her and what was her response?*

Emmanuel: *I showed her the money and asked her to have sex with me. She said okay give me the money, you see sister. I gave her the money.*

K: *Did she understand what you were talking about?*

Emmanuel: *Yes, she did.*

K: *What makes you believe she understood?*

Emmanuel: *I asked her to have sex with me, you see, but she did not understand what sex meant you see...and yes and I showed her how... I had sex with her. I called her and said come, you see. She came and I showed her how*

Despite children's lack of developmental knowledge about sex, some perpetrators claimed that children have the capacity to make informed decisions about participating in a sexual act and that they could engage in transactional sex. In reaction to a vignette²⁰ about an archbishop in this study who engaged in sexual acts with children after feeding them and later claiming they seduced him, Emmanuel suggested that the priest was justified to have sex with the children. He argued that feeding them gave the archbishop some entitlement. Although Emmanuel later admitted to sexually abusing the child, what he said illustrates

²⁰ The use of vignettes in this study is discussed in chapter 3.

his possible lack of understanding that it was wrong to sexually abuse young children. Furthermore, he did not, in his response to the vignette, discuss the children's naiveté and that there were power dynamics favouring the archbishop. Emmanuel said:

Emmanuel: These children will agree [to sex] sister... Yes because this man gives them food...he does not refuse them when they ask for food. He gives them food to eat.

K: Why would he go to them? You said he will go, why would he do that?

Emmanuel: He would go because he gives them food and the children will also agree because he gives them food.

Hunger related to poverty makes children vulnerable to abuse by perpetrators who use food and money to trap them (see Wojcicki, 2002). The risk to children is heightened by some perpetrators' assertions that asking for sex is an acceptable expectation after responding to 'cues' and offering money or drinks. Some perpetrators narratives in this study suggested that they interpreted young children's friendly behaviours to be acts of seduction. According to Wojcicki (2002, p. 276) "If you don't feed a horse, you can't ride it". Although Ruben's narrative resonates with this assertion, he distanced himself from it, blaming both the adult perpetrator and victims:

Ruben: The pastors like this you get that many times. You hear about that also. Now he is going to say I'll give you fifty cents and what are you gonna give to me? Most of the people are doing that, especially men. I saw that many times in taverns. In Taverns...even in clubs.

K: What happens?

Ruben: Especially the ladies. Young ones. I am talking about 12yr olds and upwards... 15, 16.

K: What happens?

Ruben: *Grown up men...they are hanging over grown up men. 'I like you so much, please buy me a beer'. Then the man will say okay I will buy you a beer and what's in it for me? That's where the things start.*

In some cases perpetrators claimed they were lured into abusive acts by their victims, denying responsibility for the abuse (see Chapter 5). However, some perpetrator narratives suggested they either targeted unsupervised children or abused their position of trust as carers. Some of the perpetrators claimed they were entitled to sex after bribing unsupervised children. Not only did they abuse their power by taking advantage of the children's naiveté, they also saw the children as cheap targets for sex as compared to adult women. Perpetrators who were unemployed said they were often able to afford to give or promise children as little as R10 (less than £1) or less.

Some narratives suggested they were aware that as adults they were not supposed to have sexual expectations from children. However, from what they said, when children kept on asking for money or 'nice goodies', they claimed to have viewed the requests as being similar to cues they received from adult women, saw opportunities for sex and therefore treated them in a similar way. They also claimed children who begged for money became too friendly with adults and boundaries became blurred to excuse their abusive behaviour. Javan justified his actions by claiming he was lonely and vulnerable. As a Christian who does not believe in masturbation and has a preference for younger women, he justified treating children as suitable sexual partners. This is illustrated as follows:

Javan: *You see now that's when things started going wrong. Even these small children, this school, when they go to school...hey grandpa we are asking for 50 cents to buy fat cakes at school. In the end they start getting too used to you, befriending you. This befriending, it kills the nature of how things should be. Because what I have seen now is*

that us, these girls, from us, the old men, they want the pension money we get... Yeah. Now these issues of money, modern things, money has come to find that there is no respect anymore.

K: *Is it wrong for children to ask for money?*

Javan: *It's not wrong but...if you don't have a wife, you end up having evil spirits. Even here in prison, those who don't pray to God...they sodomise each other... they struggle.*

K: *Now, you are saying this problem is common because children want money...*

Javan: *and if you give to her once, she does not go away.*

Although talk about entitlement by these perpetrators focused on the use of money for bribes, some of the men acknowledged it was inappropriate. They said that money or gifts given to children served a purpose of a bribe used to threaten and manipulate children to be silent and to cooperate with perpetrators by engaging in 'affairs' within which they are sexually abused. Marcus' narrative illustrates this point:

Marcus: *Small children have affairs with adults because they give them money. The child won't talk because she gets money. They agree because they are scared or because they got money and they keep their mouth shut. If I give her R100 she can see that this is a lot of money but she can see that this person is forcing me and because she is scared she would not say anything even when she is hurt. She will act as if all is well. If you are an uncle, once she starts talking you look at her and she stops.*

This section has demonstrated that money, food and other rewards make it easy for perpetrators to lure children into abuse and to silence them. Once the victim accepts the gift, it is assumed that they agree to sex and the perpetrator would fail to perceive his acts as abusive and as a rape despite the fact that legally children cannot consent to sex. Bribes such as food and money made children from poor families or those who are unsupervised,

vulnerable to abuse. Although most men acknowledged the use of bribes, by suggesting it was acceptable for young children to engage in what perpetrators in this study have termed 'transactional' sex with adults, their narratives suggest it was a consensual arrangement further illustrating a persistent denial of grooming (see chapter 5). Some perpetrator narratives suggested that women and children are courting abuse and need to be taught to avoid giving wrong signals and receiving gifts.

6.6 IF THAT ONE TRIES TO GIVE YOU PROBLEMS, YOU JUST SLAP HER FACE AND WHEN YOU DO THAT ONCE, SHE WILL COME TO YOU

Most men in this study admitted to being physically and sexually violent towards women. A few have admitted to rapes, with one man (Hebron, 42) claiming to be a serial adult rapist and the other (Phil, 60) being a serial young child sex abuser. Javan, 86, was convicted for sexually abusing three young children but claimed it was two. Aron and Matt were both convicted for sexually abusing two children. The use of force illustrated in perpetrator narratives highlights the normative overt subjugation of women in all aspects of women's lives.

Javan: Yes in the past women were forced to do things. Even our mothers were forced to do things.

These narratives highlight the excessive use of sexual violence to enforce control over women and children. Some men talked about how violence towards girls was common practice when they grew up and how, due to girls' immaturity, fear and lack of information, rape was not reported in their past. They talked about how young men used physical violence to coerce teenage girls into sexual relationships. One man claimed coerced sex

was not perceived as rape when he grew up. He said that when there was a hint from the teenage girl that she was going to consider his love proposal but was taking her time, the use of force to get an 'agreement' was not viewed as problematic. Caiphus's narrative illustrates this point:

Caiphus: Let me correct that. Let me be honest with you. I was in the same situation. When you grow up, there is a problem with making a love proposal. Like sometimes if you do not have friends you might not be able to make a love proposal (go shela²¹). If you tell a girl that you want to see her, she might say yeah I will see you. These things happen during school trips when we come back late at night. That's where guys go to their girls. If that one tries to give you problems, you just slap her face and when you do that once, she will come to you, you understand. Most of these kinds of rapes are not reported because these ladies are still immature. They are scared and do not know where to start... and sometimes what happens is she starts enjoying and when they finish they start chatting and its nice and you buy her whatever she wants... you to buy. You understand, now I realise that this thing is rape.

K: But at that time?

Caiphus: At that time, no I didn't have that thought that its rape.

Although Caiphus (39) who is a bit older than Steve said that this practice was in his past, similar references were made about current practices by the younger Steve (16). Steve's narrative, though similar, illustrated the use of force to avenge a girl's refusal to have sex with a boy who bought a drink for her. Some perpetrators, importantly, justified the use of force where there were expectations for 'transactional' sex. However, these men did not interpret the use of force in this context as sexual violence claiming that the girl had

²¹ 'Ugushela' is a Zulu word for making a love proposal but in this instance it has been used as 'go shela' by a Tswana speaking person. South Africans, especially those who live in townships like Soweto tend to borrow words from any of the 11 official languages.

intentionally abused the boy economically. Again, claims that teenage girls make false allegations of rape illustrate externalisation of blame. By arguing that the teenage girl had malicious intentions, Steve's narrative illustrated justification of sexual violence. However, he distanced himself from what the boy did:

Steve: You find that when people have been drinking, he would leave with a girl and the girl would later say he raped her when he didn't...when they had an agreement.

K: How do they agree whilst at the tavern?

Steve: The girl would say I want to target that boy to buy alcohol for me and I will dodge him afterwards. The boy later says no you are leaving with me... When the girl wants to leave, the boy says no you are going to sleep at my place.

K: Why?

Steve: The boy bought alcohol for her with the intention of taking her home with him.

The narratives demonstrate the hostility some perpetrators have against women who challenged male dominance by denying men access to sex. They also demonstrate how these men used force to assert their superiority on women. Hebron's narrative illustrates the hostility some men had towards women, the use of rape as a tool to punish women (see Brownmiller, 1975) and how they derived pleasure from instilling fear in women during the assault.

Hebron: You think you are the boss, I like to show you now who the boss is...Now I am starting to talk about my needs. I am calm with her. I can see whilst I am talking with her, I can see she is starting to...and that is what satisfies me at that time...I can see that this woman is starting to get frightened. I can see it, I can see it in her whole...you see it in her body language.

K: So you look at her?

Hebron: *I look at her like this in my face. I am talking to her like I am talking to you now. I am talking to her like this and I can see in her face she is starting to get...I see in her face she is starting to move and she says 'don't you want to go please' I say you know what, don't tell me 'no' man. It's now that time that I jump up. I grab her by her throat like this.*

The belief that men are entitled to sex justifies rape and instead of criminalizing it, legitimizes it. Therefore, using sex to humiliate women and children was not perceived as problematic as it served the purpose of “putting women in their place”. Hebron, 42, is white and he reported childhood adversities (see chapter 7), being diagnosed as a psychopath, heavy drug use, violent crimes including rape, hating women and being excited by instilling fear and seeing fear in women’s eyes. His narrative captures this idea:

Hebron: *Yeah, you see, I don't worry what you say, you say no, I don't worry about your no. That no doesn't exist to me. I will tell you in your face that no doesn't exist to me and I will grab you and I will take your clothes off.*

K: *So, why do you have to have whatever you want at that time?*

Hebron: *You see, I felt I was the boss. I felt I was this king, this big guy, you see. No one is going to say no or anything. If I want something I want it. And if I want something, I will kill you for it.*

K: *You wanted that time and it was also because you wanted to make sure you are in charge*

Hebron: *For myself yes. I wanted to fulfil myself.*

Hebron disclosed that he also had black women victims as he reports a preference for black women. He talked about having an ‘agreement’ to have sex with a ‘frightened’ black woman. Hebron’s narrative and the profile of the sample of this study also illustrates that

sexual violence in South Africa is non-racial as it is not only perpetrated by a particular race group:

Hebron: Yeah, she was looking for work and she came and knocked on the door. I opened the door. I had this craving the whole morning, I want sex. I had this craving the whole morning. I want sex I wish someone would come for work. It was in my mind the whole time. I opened the door. That time it was during the apartheid years.

The 80s...Yeah, she said 'baas ek vra werk' [master, I am asking for work]. I said yeah come in and sit over there. I asked if she had breakfast and she said no she didn't. I went and took steak out of the fridge, eggs and toast and I make delicious breakfast for me and her... I tell her listen here 'have you ever had sex with a White man' It's like she got a fright from what I was talking about now.

K: She was taken aback?

Hebron: Yeah. She said no, not ever. Only with my people. So, I told her listen man, come I will pay you, come. She comes into the room, take off her clothes, I have sex with her. She lets me, having sex with her. I gave her R80. At that time R80 was a lot of money.

Although Hebron's narrative suggests his intention was to "show women who is boss", it also highlights a different kind of force. It illustrates a racialised force towards vulnerable black women who were recipients of triple oppression during apartheid, that is, being black, being a woman/girl child, and being economically disadvantaged.

The narratives of some men in this section point to a preference for the use of violence to control women. Women who were said to have resisted male domination and denied men access to sex were often humiliated to put them in their place. However, changes in the South African legislation which promote women and children's rights encourage women to report all forms of violence. Men in this study said they now feared punishment. As shall

be shown in the next section, some of these men referred to this change in women's rights legislation as a deterrent to the abuse of adult women, and a hindrance to their sexual entitlements.

6.7 RIGHTS ARE RIGHT BUT THEY ARE ALSO NOT RIGHT...

Some of the men claimed that women are now encouraged to undermine and challenge male authority by denying them access to sex. Jerry's narrative illustrated this point:

Jerry: Most of the time you [women] also have a tendency of saying no. You refuse when asked to do such a thing. You keep on refusing, refusing and refusing and only to find that this guy starts thinking, worrying about that because he wanted this and you said no.

K: If someone says no can't you just leave it?

Jerry: What gets us into trouble most of the time is that if someone says 'no' it's not like she is saying no forever...and she might agree tomorrow. It's not forever. But that's what kills us because we just say she refused and she is taking me for granted.

Perpetrators' narratives suggested that they believed it was unacceptable for women to refuse to have sex on the grounds of feeling tired. They attributed women's bravery to saying 'no' to democratic governance and the new legislation that protects women's rights. Although they acknowledged that women have rights, they reported finding it difficult to accept these rights as women's rights because they undermine their patriarchal power over them. Zeb's narrative illustrates this point suggesting that women's rights infringe upon men's rights to access sex as and when they want:

Zeb: What causes all these problems...you know the rights these days, I can't lie to you...rights are right but they are also not right. Others use them even where it's not

necessary because now I have one wife and when I get home I feel that we could go to 'Pietersburg' [have sex] and she doesn't want to go to 'Pietersburg'. She says she is tired. Do you realise that is not good for me because I told myself that I really want to go to 'Pietersburg' and she doesn't want to go there. For others that is not good. There are men who are able to accept it if the wife says we are just going to sleep today, one would face that way and the other the other way.

Furthermore some perpetrator narratives suggest rights empower women to dictate when to have sex, rendering men powerless. To them the changing status of women is problematic as it takes away the control they had over women, infringes on their 'right to sex', and is emasculating. Javan's narrative captures this view:

Javan: My wife, she said she is old and her ancestors do not want a man. How woman...you like this...when you are still menstruating? ...even very old women who are not menstruating are still sleeping with their husbands...I have never heard of such. She said 'not me'. She left and went to sleep with the children. Yeah, I slept alone. Then late at 21:00 [after weeks], she woke up and came over...got onto bed, when she got onto bed she did not face me, she faced the other side. She said 'Are you not doing it, I am leaving'. Ah, are you still my wife or a girlfriend? She then said 'hey I am not in court, if you don't want tell me and I will leave'. Then as a priest and headman, I went ahead and hopped on like a cow and when I finished helping myself, she woke up and left. She takes two to three weeks and during one night at nine you'll see her coming.

Although they acknowledge implications of democratisation for women and children, some of the narratives demonstrate an expectation of unchallenged domination. To some of these men the abuse of rights by women is unacceptable as it raises suspicions of infidelity and interferes with men's sexual entitlement. The narratives suggest that this interference is

perceived by some of these men as a challenge to male authority. Therefore when a woman said 'no' these men said they became suspicious of infidelity. The men in this study also stated that suspicions they had often led to preoccupation with sex. Such statements are used by some of these men to justify sexual violence towards their partners. Zeb's argument that a woman has to be visibly ill to be excused from sex illustrates this view:

Zeb: I can't lie to you sister, I couldn't take that. It was difficult for me to just sleep...she faces that way and I face the other way? I don't want to lie and I don't want to lie and say there was something preventing me from accepting it. If she said to me she is not feeling well, unless if I could see that she is unwell, yeah, I can see she is not well but if she is well but just saying that she doesn't want to she is sleeping, eish, gee, my thoughts run wild. Why doesn't she want to today? Did she perhaps have sex with others out there and she doesn't want me to go in there. You see, those kinds of thoughts come to me.

The idea that women cannot be trusted as they falsely accuse men and report them to the police for sexual violence has been used by most participants to portray women as a threat to male superiority. Some men have suggested that this has led to a fear in women. As a result some men have stated they avoid imposing themselves on adult women for fear of punishment.

Jasper captures this viewpoint:

Jasper: ...women bath their children and sometimes children have sores on their privates because of the soap they use, as it itches, she would scratch, so the mother might say you did it, because it's red. You have to tread carefully and avoid confrontation with the mother. We are now scared of women these days.

As mentioned earlier, most perpetrators reported being sexually violent towards women but not seeing their use of force as rape. The current legislation dictates that sexual violence should be punishable by law. Perpetrators claim that their fear emanates from women's abuse of these rights by demanding money after sex and making false accusations of rape if men fail to pay. They therefore use these explanations to justify refraining from sexual involvement with adult women to avoid being falsely accused. Jasper's narratives illustrate this point:

Jasper: You would be in good terms now, have an affair with her, have sex with her and when you leave she might say you did such things to her because you didn't give her the money you were supposed to give to her. You will then be in trouble.

Although perpetrators mostly referred to adult women's demands for money, Javan's narrative illustrates that he, like some other perpetrators, did not differentiate between adult women and children. As a result, when women started reporting incidents of sexual violence, some of these men found it problematic because they did not seem to understand that sexual violence was inappropriate.

Javan: That is why I say the world is messed up...I don't understand as well how come...That is why I say the world is messed up....small ones and older ones...it's the same...this will not be reversed because most of us who have been arrested, most of us are reported by women. You have sex with her and when you fail to give her money, she reports you and says you raped her.

Some participants blamed the ANC government for changes to male privileges. One man claimed that during apartheid there was no interference in family matters suggesting the

previous regime's lack of interference implied that sexual violence against women and children was not seen as problematic: Javan's narrative illustrates this point:

Javan: Yes because all these changed during the ANC government because Whites did not interfere in family matters.

Traditionally, according to most of these men, a man has a right to sex anytime. The legislative changes have therefore precipitated a crisis of masculinity for most of the men in this study as evidenced in their talk about the loss of power positions in their relationships with women. This change implies that they have lost access to sex on their terms and are dependent on their partners. This powerlessness in the home and in relationships with adult women has, according to some perpetrator narratives, been used to justify sexual abuse of young children for sexual gratification. . They excused their sexually abusive behaviour towards young children by claiming that the male sexual urge is biologically determined and uncontrollable and should be responded to by any means.

Javan: Rapists like me, we were trying to relieve ourselves as you said that those boys said they wanted to reduce the blood pressure.

This section has presented the data about perpetrator frustrations with women's rights. They believe these have created obstacles for access to sex by empowering women to challenge male authority and become untrustworthy. However these men know that the use of force against women is punishable. The narratives also illustrate that these men do not understand why it should be punishable because they do not interpret their behaviour as inappropriate in line with their belief in patriarchy. Their claims for a fear of women illustrate a failure to recognise women's rights and gender equality. Furthermore, they used

this fear to justify sexual abuse of young children illustrating a power motive which they alleged was not achievable from women who know about rights.

6.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented data illustrating that most perpetrators in the study view men as superior to women and that women and children are perceived as inferior. Both are perceived as possessions under male control and domination. Perpetrators say that they have an uncontrollable biological sexual urge and that they are entitled to sex whenever with whomever they want to quell their sexual desires and keep them calm. It presented perpetrators' justifications for having multiple sex partners which include ensured access to sex, variety and excitement. The data also illustrated how these men perceived economic resources (money or rewards) as important tools for enticing women and grooming children to secure a sense of entitlement to sex. The narratives in this chapter demonstrated perpetrators' justification for using force to maintain their position of superiority over women. The use of extreme forms of force such as rape and gang rape were not deemed as problematic when they were aimed at putting women in their place. Democratization of South Africa and the introduction of legislation that protects women and children's rights were perceived as a challenge. The challenges subsequently impacted negatively on perpetrators' patriarchal ideology bringing about the crisis of masculinity. What perpetrators said illustrates that they mostly claimed being disempowered in intimate relationships. Being disempowered affected their control over women and most importantly access to sex which perpetrators believed to be a biological right for all men. Perpetrator narratives also illustrated that they perceived the empowerment of women as a threat to male domination mainly because they would be punished if they used force. What they communicated as problematic was that they felt powerless to control women whilst at the same time their belief in sexual entitlement and sexual desires remain untamed.

This study set out to explore how perpetrators made sense of sexual abuse of young children. The data from this study suggests that a) the problem of sexual violence is gender based and is rooted in the patriarchal ideology handed down from elders ; b) tolerance for sexual violence in South Africa is perpetuated by narratives that legitimize patriarchy justifying the importance of male domination and subordination of women and children who are viewed as possessions; c) men's belief in biologically determined uncontrollable sexual urge; d) justification for multiple sex partners which legitimate infidelity for men; e) the use of men's financial positions to entice, entrap and control women and children for sex; f) the use of sexual violence as an instrument of exercising power and control over women and children; and g) perception of legislation that promotes women's rights as disempowering to men. It is reasonable to conclude that the sexual abuse of young children, though not for all men in this study was mostly, as illustrated in chapter 7, a way of exercising power. This was mainly due to the unequal gender-based power relations in South Africa legitimated by the patriarchal nature of society which privileges male sexual entitlement. The evidence in the data illustrated encouragement and tolerance for sexual violence against women. The next chapter illustrates that where adult women were inaccessible, accessing children for sex was not perceived as problematic by perpetrators in this study.

CHAPTER 7 - EXPLAINING THE UNSPEAKABLE

Aron: About sex with children it's all about an individual's mind. Sometimes we say the person was bewitched when that is not the case. It's just in his mind. You find that I have a daughter aged two or three and maybe there are differences between me and the wife and in the end we separate. Your mind tells you that here is a child...or the woman is refusing you with conjugal rights and you end up helping yourself with a child.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents perpetrator explanations for engaging in sexual abuse of young children. Chapter six provided insight into these men's views about sexuality and their attitudes towards women, that is, their beliefs about manhood; matters of sexual entitlement from women and children; and explanations about difficulties they alleged to have experienced in satisfying their sexual desires through legal routes. These men have denied (reported in chapter four) that the virgin myth was their motivation for sexual abuse of young children. The current chapter presents their explanations of their motivations for sexually abusing young children. In providing details about these explanations most perpetrators shared their opinions and or personal experiences about sex with young children. The decision to use or not use personal experiences was influenced by whether the perpetrators had admitted or denied committing a sexual offence against a young child during interviews.

Although extensive research on explanations for sexual abuse has been done (Mtibo et al., 2011; Polaschek and Gannon, 2004; Ward and Keenan, 1999; Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott, 1994; Finkelhor and Araji, 1986), there continue to be conflicting views about why some men sexually abuse young children. The two main arguments about sexual violence

focus on whether the perpetrator's intention is acquisition of position of dominance (Jewkes, Penn-Kekana and Rose-Junius, 2005; Wood and Jewkes, 2001; Malamuth and Briere, 1986; Brownmiller, 1975) or sexual gratification (Mtibo et al., 2011; Hartley, 2001; Malamuth and Check, 1983; Prescott, 1975). Most of these explanations were drawn from studies conducted outside South Africa from different socio-cultural context which therefore may not be applicable to South African circumstances.

This chapter has two sections. It starts with a brief presentation of perpetrators' explanations about their circumstances (prior to their abusive behaviour) which focused on their childhood adversities and ends with perpetrators' narratives illustrating pro-abusive attitudes to young children.

7.2 PERPETRATOR'S EXPLANATIONS ABOUT CIRCUMSTANCES PRIOR TO ABUSIVE BEHAVIOUR

This thesis did not set out to focus on perpetrator narratives about their background. However, perpetrators in this study often used their backgrounds to make sense of sexual abuse of young children. It is therefore important to give a brief overview of their stories.

7.2.1 Childhood adversities

Perpetrator narratives about their family background suggest that the majority of these men had adverse childhood experiences. Some of the adversities they reported suggest they were raised in broken, chaotic families in which they moved from one carer to the other as illustrated in table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Parenting backgrounds of participants

Type of carer arrangements	No of participants
Raised by both parents	12
Raised by one biological parent and a stepparent	4
Raised by a single mother	3
Raised by grandparent(s)	5
Raised by aunt/uncle	4
Raised by sister	2
Raised by employers	1
Raised in an institution	2
Lived in a child-headed household as carer of younger sibling	1
Moved between carers	8

Frequent moves between carers and institutions illustrated in their narratives indicate that many perpetrators had an unstable upbringing and may have had poor parent child relationships. They reported that instabilities were due to loss of a parent, family disorganisation/breakdown as a result of death, parental separation and childhood abuse. In addition, during interviews many of these men discussed not knowing who their parents were and that carers often kept their parentage a secret from them. For example:

***Hebron:** So, one day I was there with a photo album, I was still small, in Std 5 (Year 7) and I was looking at the photos. ... So, I was sitting there and my grandfather was sitting next to me and I saw this photo of this woman that I never saw in my life before and I saw that this woman looks exactly like my sister and I started asking my grandfather 'who is this one?' He tells me that he doesn't want to talk now and if I am older and grown up he will talk to me. I said no I am big enough I want to know who this woman is. Why is this*

woman in my photo album? He started talking to me 'that's your real mother, she is dead, she died of sugar diabetes years back when you were still small and she was a prostitute at that time when you were in Durban. I don't look like anyone in the family... Yeah, my real mother, she was a prostitute and actually, I am not...they don't even know if I am really my father's boy.

Within these disorganised families, perpetrators reported parental substance misuse which often led to domestic violence. Most of the participants reported witnessing violence, often with fatal consequences perpetrated mostly by their fathers or stepfathers against their mothers. Raphael said:

Raphael: *The boyfriend my mother had before this one, he was abusing us a lot. We couldn't sleep at night...he was abusing us.*

K: *How?*

Raphael: *When you are asleep he just takes something to beat you up...a piece of plank or maybe a fern belt or anything he gets. He beats you up even if you did nothing wrong. When he comes back from work, he buys maybe one beer, after drinking that beer, he starts to abuse us, abuse my mother. He beat her up so badly so much that she had lots of cuts on her face, her lips are cut... Yeah, he beat my sister up as well.*

In most cases, the participants reported being physically and emotionally harmed by the domestic violence they had witnessed. Although physical abuse was the most common abuse reported by participants, their narratives illustrate that they had suffered other forms of abuse including emotional abuse and neglect. Nathan reported suffering different types of abuse. He talked about the humiliation and the neglect he suffered suggesting that this abuse had impacted negatively on his development. Nathan said:

Nathan: I would be insulted like a dog. I had to keep quiet most of the time... I didn't get an opportunity to go out on school trips. I would beg to go. If I go, I go empty-handed and that broke my heart... The treatment I got at home prevented me from getting opportunities.

Table 7.2 below shows the various types of abuse the participants described as well as their relationships to the alleged abusers.

Table 7.2: Participants' reported childhood abuse and their perpetrators

Perpetrator of abuse	Type of abuse			
	Physical	Emotional	Neglect	Sexual abuse
Father	4	2	4	1
Mother		1	2	
Stepfather	1	1		
Stepmother	1	1		
Aunt			1	1
Uncle		1		1
Grandmother	1	1	1	
Cousin				1 (female)
Brother	1	1		
Stepbrother				1
Sister		1		
Half sister	1			1
Nephew				1
Neighbour		1		1 (female)
Teacher (female)	1			1
Employer		1(female)		

The data in this table illustrates that much of the abuse was perpetrated mainly by men but not necessarily fathers because they mostly reported not living with their fathers. Some participants reported they missed out on learning about manhood because their fathers

were absent in their lives. Furthermore, they suggested in their narratives that the neglect by their fathers had a negative impact on their ability to initiate and maintain intimate relationships with peers as illustrated in the following quote:

***Saul:** I am scared to say I love you ...I couldn't say 'I love you because when I have to say that word I freeze.*

Other participants suggested that when other relatives abused them, they did so under the instruction of women including grandmothers and stepmothers. For example:

***Nathan:** My family members, because they were commanded by my grandmother to do so. Like my brother...if I am wrong, she would tell my brother to beat me up.*

Furthermore, participants' narratives suggest that female perpetrated abuse brought about feelings of hatred and hostility towards women. This point is evidenced in the following extract:

***K:** What was making you so angry towards women that you became so violent towards them?*

***Hebron:** You see, it was more like...things with my mother [stepmother]...she was very weird with us. She didn't...actually in the beginning she didn't like us. She was hitting us and mistreating us and always telling my father, 'yeah hit him, if you want to kill him kill him'. You see, that started, that's when I started. Every woman I see, if I see a lady, never mind how nice she is, that comes into my mind. This is the devil.*

Therefore, some participants' narratives suggest that due to hostility towards women, sexually abusive behaviour was mostly aimed at controlling women and power acquisition as revenge for these acts of abuse. Hebron's narrative illustrates this point:

***Hebron:** I had this hate in myself. So if I see you I feel like I want it [sex] now, never mind where you are. I just want to take you, I want to show you something. You think you are the boss, I like to show you now who the boss is.*

Although most participants spoke of physical and emotional abuse during childhood, others made claims of childhood sexual abuse as well. Table 7.3 below illustrates that seven of the twenty seven participants reported childhood sexual abuse.

Table 7.3: Perpetrator details of childhood sexual abuse

Name	Age at the time the abuse took place	Relationship to abuser	Gender of abuser
Raphael (19)	11	Nephew	Male
Saul (19)	17	Unknown gang	Males
Nathan (26)	12	Neighbour	Female
Hebron (42)	Between 4 and 16	Aunt, uncle, other women	Females and male
Ruben (36)	15	Stepbrother	Male
Phil (60)	Approximately 5	Maternal uncle, teacher	Male and female
Javan (86)	Approximately 6	Half-sister, cousins	Females

Other perpetrator narratives illustrate that they claimed to have learned about sexual acts from adults they knew and trusted. In explaining their experiences they used words such as

‘play’ and ‘fun’ claiming they heard and learned about sexually abusive behaviour as “play” from their abusers. Furthermore, they made claims that they viewed anything an adult does as right and therefore did not see their abusive behaviour as problematic. This suggests they may have interpreted these acts as part of socialisation. Phil said:

Phil: But sometimes I ran away but sometimes he caught me in bed. I was sleeping in bed. To me, at that time there was nothing wrong about it. He is a big man and I am a kid. It's like I play soccer with my father. It's the same, nothing wrong about it.

Furthermore, data presented in table 7.4 suggest that some of the participants started abusing children whose ages resembled the ages during which they themselves reported having been abused.

Table 7.4: Comparison of perpetrator age during childhood sexual abuse and that of their victims

Name of perpetrator	Age of perpetrator at the time their abuse took place	Age of victim at the time the abuse took place	Gender of victim	Number of victims
Raphael (19)	11	18 months	Female	1
Saul (19)	17	5	Female	1
Nathan (26)	12	6	Female	1
Hebron (42)	Between 4 and 16	4 Adults	Female Females (black and white)	1 Multiple
Ruben (36)	15	4	Male	1
Phil (60)	Approximately 5	5	Females	5
Javan (86)	Approximately 6	6	Females	3

Perpetrators reported that they were abused by people they knew. Table 7.3 above illustrates that participants' abusers were both male and female. According to perpetrator narratives, 27 participants were convicted for sexual abuse of child victims of the same race. Although Hebron also abused a White child in his race group, he also reported a history of being sexually violent to both Black and White adult women.

In making sense of sexual abuse of young children, some of the perpetrators used these narratives and insight gained during sex offender treatment programs to blame childhood

sexual abuse for the development of sexual interest in children suggesting they enacted what they learned during childhood. Nathan said:

Nathan: I think she made a bad contribution in my life by getting this thing in me...as I speak right now, it's because of...the time when this happened to me when I had sex with an adult and when I had sex with Kate, they are similar. I am learning about that here in prison. Some of the things come to light. If it was not that person, this might not have happened.

In this section, I have shown that most perpetrators experienced broken and unstable childhoods in disorganised families. These adversities also included childhood sexual abuse. Furthermore, I have shown they used their backgrounds to explain how they developed sexual interest in young children. These explanations draw on the cycle of abuse explanations which has been extensively documented by research on child sex abusers. Therefore, although perpetrator narratives about their own experiences of childhood sexual abuse in this study are similar to findings in other studies on perpetrators (Burton, 2003), they do not completely explain the nuances about why young children are the targets of abuse in South Africa.

7.3 PERPETRATOR NARRATIVES ON PRO-ABUSIVE ATTITUDES TO YOUNG CHILDREN.

This section explores perpetrator narratives about what triggered their sexual attraction to children. Many of the perpetrators spoke in the third person or moved between first and third person as a way of creating distance from views that they expressed. These narratives are salient as they provide insights into how child sexual abuse perpetrators perceive this act can be explained and even choreographed by a perpetrator, whether the explanations are indeed from their own ideas or those they gathered from others.

7.3.1 Seeing the child's physical attributes as sexually attractive

Participants' narratives suggest that some men were sexually attracted to the children's physical attributes. Some men described developing sexual interest in children with physical features they found attractive, becoming sexually aroused by watching children as illustrated in the following extract:

Aron: Eh, let me say that I have a 4yr old child and a male person pays me a visit and sees that 4yr old child. Maybe that child...you dress her the way you like because she is just a child, and you are not suspecting that anything could happen, that person would observe that the child is beautiful; she is fresh and cute... You will end up making a mistake on the child because of your thoughts and feelings. You will end up having sex with the child because you were admiring the child's beauty.

Some perpetrators suggested that the child's mannerisms and children's presentation were also sexually attractive. Abram stated that once the child has caught the perpetrator's attention, he would monitor her and her environment, and sexually abuse her when the opportunity presented itself. Although he positioned himself as a non-abuser, his talk about a short dress illustrates how he sexualised children's behaviour in the same way he viewed adult women. He said:

Abram: The problem is that when the child is busy moving around, you look too much and start checking if there is anyone around who could disturb me. He would continue looking at the child with lust and then tell himself he could do her quickly. He looks at the child's body and the way she is dressed up. Sometimes the dress could be a little bit shorter and

you will see as well that eish this child...let me have her and feel how it is a bit. Only to find that you are causing a mess. That's what I think.

The sexualized language used by perpetrators when talking about young children further suggests some perpetrators' lack of differentiation between children and adult women. Such attitudes explain why they often become preoccupied with fantasies about engaging in sexual acts with children and enacting such fantasies through sexually abusive acts. This point is illustrated in Abram's narrative in which he, like other participants who denied the offence, often distanced themselves from the sexually abusive behaviour to maintain their alleged innocence stance:

Abram: *... when you check, there is something in you, your attention is drawn by your neighbour's child. She is attractive to you and she is hot... She is plump and shiny [in a sexual way] (o a tshutshuma).*

K: *What does that mean?*

Abram: *When they say a person is fit it means she is fit and curvy (o pakile), is beautiful, she is plump and fit, all she needs is a person to show her the way. That's the language they use.*

K: *That's how you talk?*

Abram: *Yes, this person is fit and curvy and all she needs is someone to...raise her for himself, there is this thing of saying you want to raise a child for yourself.*

K: *You raise her for you?*

Abram: *Yes. That's their thing...to raise her so that when she is grown up you could have her but that word...you used it at the wrong time...Before time... You are done with her.*

K: *When she is still small?*

Abram: *Yes, whilst she is still small. Maybe the child is about three to four...that age group...and you already have your eyes on her.*

Phil reported sexually abusing his daughters. As a father he had unlimited access to the children and reported using this opportunity to abuse his position of trust by manipulating them into sexually abusive acts. He was the only participant to report being attracted by children's hairless, smooth bodies. He justified his abusive acts by blaming his wife for not making herself attractive for him by refusing to shave. He said:

Phil: No, you see it's a child you know. It's maybe because, it's one thing, I was fantasising out there. My wife doesn't want to remove her pubic hair. The difference between them is that the kids don't have hair and my wife has got hair.

K: You wanted her to be smoother?

Phil: I asked my wife many times to cut it off but she never did. Why I don't know. She said its germ free, if you cut your hair off, you will get germs.

K: For her, she was using the hair to protect herself from germs?

Phil: Yeah and she was not smooth like the kids. That's why I ...okay, I will say I did it more with the kids than I would do it with her. If she wants tonight... 'I want to do sex with you' and she starts talking in that direction, at the end of the day I find a way to avoid it with her.

K: So you preferred the children more than her.

Phil: It started getting more and more and more.

Although Phil, a father who has admitted to have sexual interest in his children, planned his sexually abusive acts, some perpetrator narratives (see chapter 5) suggest others acted impulsively. The commonality is that by choosing to prioritize sexual gratification over upholding their position of trust as protectors of children, their actions suggest their motive may be abuse of power for sexual gratification. Paul's narrative illustrates further that some

fathers choose to abuse their position of trust for sexual gratification. However, he distanced himself from this view:

***Paul:** Some of the men when they have a responsibility to bath their children and change nappies, when they see the child's genital area, they start developing a desire towards that child. He ends up taking a decision to pleasuring himself with her.*

Although the physical attributes were important explanatory factors for sexual interest in children, other perpetrator narratives suggest the age of the child was also important in guaranteeing sexual purity which they claimed made sex more enjoyable. Shepherd shifted between agreeing with this view and distancing himself from it:

***Shepherd:** I think sometimes the stepfathers, they are doing this thing with a reason of...they started to see that no, ah...ok...no this is my wife...my wife is getting older and this daughter is still young...is still fresh. He just wants to enjoy sex with her because her mother is getting older because there is this motive that we as men keep on telling ourselves that when we sleep with a young woman, we enjoy more rather than if I end up sleeping with an older person.*

***K:** Why do you enjoy more with a younger person than with an older person?*

***Shepherd:** Okay, we keep on telling ourselves that those young women, their blood is fresh.*

***K:** Mm. Is that the only reason?*

***Shepherd:** Yeah, is what we use to tell ourselves... Yeah the blood is fresh, even the body sometimes, and the shape.*

Titus' narrative illustrated further claims by some of these men that sex with a virgin is enjoyable. However, he distanced himself from such claims asserting that they are mere excuses for abusive behaviour towards children stating that:

Titus: Others when they see a small child they just tell themselves that this is a virgin you see. Maybe they just see a virgin. Maybe they want to experience how it is to have sex with a virgin. But I don't think they will enjoy it because that person when you have sex with her, you won't feel the way you do when you have sex with a person in your age group. I don't think so because in the first place you are going to hurt her. The issue about a virgin I think it's a lame excuse.

Although some of the perpetrators in this study distanced themselves from sexually abusive behaviours, the data in this section shows that they are of the view that some men have sexual interest in children. Their explanations suggest that sexual interest towards children is triggered by the child's physical features, the manner of dress, mannerisms, and sexual purity.

7.3.2 Seeing a child as a powerless object

Perpetrator narratives in the previous section suggested that sexual abuse occurs because some men are sexually attracted to children. In this section, I show that perpetrator narratives suggest that at the time of the arousal the most important goal was sexual gratification even if there was some insight into the harm caused to the child. Furthermore, participants' narratives suggest that they abused children because they were powerless and it did not matter if they were hurt. The children's pain did not matter because in a male dominated society women and children are dehumanised and perceived as objects of male pleasure. Nathan's account illustrates this point:

K: Why didn't you go look for someone when you felt that way?

Nathan: It didn't come to my mind at that time. I went out into the street and it was busy in the yard. I was cleaning at that time. At that time, when I went out, she arrived.

K: *When you saw her what did you see?*

Nathan: *An object.*

K: *What do you mean?*

Nathan: *What I mean is that on that day I was not using the mind of a human being. I didn't even see that it's a child.*

Luke's narrative illustrates this point further suggesting that the objectification of girls is part of men's agenda to dominate and control women and children. He said:

Luke: *It's lack of responsibility and lack of thinking...seeing a child as a sex object because she is a girl child.*

Perpetrator narratives suggest that some abusers feel that they had no option at the time of the arousal but to take advantage of the children's vulnerabilities which made them easy and safe target for abuse. Raphael's narrative suggests that perpetrators make attempts to hide their acts to avoid punishment because they know what they are doing is inappropriate. However, he distances himself from this view:

Raphael: *It's like if you ...maybe that person, they didn't get needs like maybe they wanted to have sex with the other girl and they didn't get it and they know if they are going to force that woman she is going to call the police or so. So they think ah, when I do small children they can't speak for themselves. I think that's the main reason why they go for small children instead of adults.*

The narratives of the men in this study illustrate that they often take advantage of children's vulnerabilities including lack of language, lack of vocabulary about sexuality and the culture of obedience and trust in adults when targeting children. Some perpetrator

narratives suggest that these vulnerabilities make it easy for children to be manipulated and overpowered. Abram's narrative illustrates that men choose a child as she is naïve, accepting and reliable and unlikely to reject them as their peers had done:

Abram: *The adult goes for the child because the child doesn't know how to talk, she can't talk and she is unable to say no. She can't talk for herself and she can't say no... If I go to someone the same age group as myself, she will be able to talk for herself and to reject me with reasons. But with a child, I will just impose myself on her as long as I know what she likes and have what she likes. I say to her 'look, if you don't give me what I want, I won't give you what you like'. She will say 'okay uncle lets go then'. You see now, it's because she wants what I brought for her.*

Explanations by perpetrators suggest that some choose children because they know that if a child is aware of her victimisation, it is easy to manipulate her feelings of guilt with bribes or threats to silence her. Ben's narrative illustrates this point as follows:

Ben: *You'll find that the child is quiet and is not saying anything because she thinks her mom would chastise her. All she can think about it's her mother. If it was not for her mother, she would talk. On the other hand you are also giving her bribes and she doesn't worry that much but that doesn't erase it from her mind. There are a lot of children who disclose but there is also a lot who do not.*

The use of bribes to make children cooperate in keeping the abuse secret is further illustrated by Saul. His narrative also suggests that young children are chosen as victims of abuse because perpetrators want to take advantage of children's assumed forgetfulness to avoid being caught. However, some of the perpetrators in this study were reported by the children they assumed would not disclose the abuse. Saul said:

K: *You didn't think that you might get caught?*

Saul: *No. I didn't think they would catch me.*

K: *You thought you won't be caught. What made you think that?*

Saul: *Because she wouldn't talk.*

K: *What made you think she wouldn't talk?*

Saul: *Because I asked her not to tell.*

K: *What made you believe she wouldn't talk?*

Saul: *I thought that once I finish she won't remember.*

Saul's narrative reflects the dehumanisation of the child and inability to empathise. Saying he thought she would not remember the trauma of sex shows he is aware she is not a full person and would not fully comprehend what he did to her. Besides relying on the child's forgetfulness, one participant's narrative illustrated that some perpetrators have insight about the elasticity of the child's genitalia and that they use this awareness to target young children as abuse might not be easily detected. Therefore, to some perpetrators the likelihood of being caught is reduced due to the supposed lack of both physical evidence and the child's inability to disclose the abuse. This illustrates lack of awareness and self interest in perpetrators who are preoccupied with sexual gratification despite the potential harm to the child. Paul deliberately distanced himself from this view:

Paul: *Others tell themselves that whatever is there on that child, others say its elastic, they say it's elastic only to find that that's when he is going to commit murder on that child.*

Jerry described how perpetrators made efforts to conceal evidence of the abuse (and to silence the children illustrating some awareness that their actions were inappropriate) through withdrawal. He distanced himself from these acts by using the third person:

Jerry: *The one [the mother] who is gone should not find out what I have done now. You have to make sure that she does not find out that you had this one. You have to make sure that this child is not hurt.*

K: *How do you do that?*

Jerry: *I don't know how they do it.*

K: *What do others say?*

Jerry: *The way I see it, when it is supposed to ejaculate, I think it doesn't ejaculate inside. He might take it out because if it ejaculates inside, it will be very clear that something happened.*

Such attempts to conceal evidence may explain why some of the perpetrators in this study reported that they were falsely accused for child sexual abuse and convicted without evidence for abuse even though they demanded forensic investigations during court proceedings, which they knew would not be available.

Some participants' narratives illustrate that although they often deny their abusive acts, they recognise and acknowledge that child sexual abuse is the abuse of power by adults over children. They also used strong words illustrating that some of them have insight into the cruelty involved in sexual abuse of young children for adult sexual gratification and the significant physical and emotional harm to the victim. Nathan's narrative acknowledges that the consequences of sexual abuse could be life threatening to the child:

Nathan: *No, it's like you are masturbating but one thing you must know is that you are killing someone...attacking someone who is not in a position to respond, a person who has never had sex with a man, a person who doesn't even know that you are masturbating. She is not developed yet and she doesn't know anything, it's just to kill her.*

However, those perpetrators who found it challenging to have intimate relationships with their peers, as illustrated earlier in this chapter, tend to resort to children for sexual gratification because the risks of being caught are minimised due to the child's naiveté and powerlessness. Therefore the child is targeted as an object for sexual gratification which could be manipulated to conceal abusive acts despite the known life threatening risks involved in sexual abuse of young children.

7.3.3 Seeing a Child as a woman

The tendency by study participants to conflate the words 'child' and 'woman' illustrate sexualisation of childhood. Egan and Hawkes (2008, p. 295) state that "in its most acute form, sexualisation is linked to sexual violence". Perpetrators in this study have used it as a device for denying agency to avoid taking on a self-identity as a child offender. Their narratives illustrate that they view both women and children as powerless and in need of male control. Perpetrator narratives highlight three issues. There are those who do not only conflate the words women and children but see children as women. Some men talked about seeing a woman as a child and treating her as such. Others talked openly about their fantasies about sexual acts with children. Phil disclosed fantasising about sexual relationships with his young daughters, having a preference for children and acting on these fantasies. In his fantasies he saw his victims as his equals. He shows this in narrating a story of a sexual experience with a girl when he was in school who he had smuggled into his room at boarding school, he refers to her as a woman:

Phil: Yeah, I wasn't there for too long because of that stuff that happened with that woman...when they caught us in bed.

K: Which woman?

Phil: [laughing] The same one, at the headmaster's house.

K: *You mean the girl?*

Phil: *Yeah. You know sometimes we did outside and sometimes we smuggled them into the room and we do it there.*

To illustrate this further others also referred to a young child as a woman or lady on more than one occasion during the interviews. For example:

Shepherd: *You already know even yourself that if I am doing this thing I am going to hurt this lady, to hurt this child because her vagina is still small.*

Some of the perpetrator narratives suggest that some men overlook the age difference between them and children by not differentiating between adult women and children when choosing with whom to 'have sex'. By claiming they saw children as women, some perpetrators suggested that children acted seductively because they were ready for sex to justify giving children the status of women. Doing so meant that in their fantasies childhood ceased to exist as children's friendly behaviours were interpreted as a sign that they are capable of initiating and taking charge of sexual acts with adults. To illustrate this point Emmanuel used information he reported reading from a book about adult-child sex. He said:

K: *Tell me why you do not choose.*

Emmanuel: *The way I see it sister, I can say there are no children anymore in this world*

K: *Tell me more.*

Emmanuel: *There are no children anymore... I read this book and I don't remember where it is. It said there are three people travelling together. They are small around 8, 7, and 6 years old. It's three girls. They moved around looking for boys of my age group. The book went on to say there are no children anymore, these children are older. The book*

shows pictures of children aged 8 and adults having intimate relationships. It says there are no children and no adults.

K: *If it says there are no children anymore...I don't understand.*

Emmanuel: *The children in that age group are not perceived that way anymore.*

What Emmanuel said shows that some of the perpetrators interpret children's friendliness and demands for money as representing sexual cues similar to those given by adult women. Such cues implied, to some men, that the child wishes for an intimate relationship. In his narrative Javan claimed that "befriending kills the nature of how things should be" and he used this excuse together with views about sexual entitlement to justify engaging in sexually abusive acts with young children. Javan said:

Javan: *We start making love proposals to one another and things get messed up. We then lose respect. Even these children...'hey grandpa, buy this and that, grandpa may you please give me fifty cents. You meet and if you keep on giving it to her, she gets used to you and from there your attitude changes and you become corrupted and become attracted to her as a woman, you see. That's how things got messed up leading to loss of respect.*

Although some men (Javan and Phil) suggested that they were not in a substance induced state when they reported seeing children as women, other men claimed that alcohol impaired their judgement. They talked about how children are transformed into women through fantasy in order objectify them into a vagina for sexual entitlement. Shepherd's narrative illustrated this point though he often shifted in his stance by also distancing himself from this view to maintain his claimed innocence:

K: *Are you saying that men are able to perceive children in a different way?*

Shepherd: *Yes they are. Isn't it you can see that if you look at the current generation you know what happens in their minds...you can't understand? Like myself, as you see me, I go to a tavern to drink alcohol. I will see a woman who is even much older than my mother, she is about my grandmother's age, you understand?*

K: *Mm.*

Shepherd: *When I arrive at the tavern and start drinking, I see that this person is a granny you see. But once I start to get drunk, really drunk, when I look at her, I see her changing, changing bit by bit, bit by bit, becoming a cherry²² [lass]. She doesn't age.*

K: *She is not old anymore?*

Shepherd: *Yes, she is not old anymore, that is, her aging is reversed, I mould her, I shape her, she becomes beautiful, she becomes beautiful, and then I start making a proposal now.*

K: *What about a child?*

Shepherd: *A child, I just give her...I don't know how to put it...I make her grow, I groom her. They say you groom her and she becomes beautiful. And you picture her as a beautiful older person. Isn't it there are those who are fat, you imagine her as a grown up, beautiful. Isn't it you tell yourself in your mind?*

K: *In his mind?*

Shepherd: *Yes, in his mind, he ends up with a vision of her beautiful vagina, you see. Then he ends up raping her.*

Hebron's narrative illustrates this point further. He claimed he was heavily drunk and drugged when he visualised his niece (5) as a woman. By saying "I got the reaction I wasn't supposed to have", he suggested he was aware of the fact that sexual attraction to children is inappropriate. Hebron said:

²² A 'cherry' is street language used to refer to a girlfriend or sweetheart in South Africa.

Hebron: *I started drinking and I am not actually a drinker and I was getting drunk and I am doing things that I am not realising. I drank until I realised it's not good because this drinking is trouble. I decided to smoke some drugs and spike some marijuana. I went to the bathroom in the house. I spiked a couple of shots and smoked rocks and sniffed two lines of coke, came out. It's just there where the problem started... When I came out there I saw that girl. She wasn't looking...it wasn't a small girl anymore. She looked to me like a big girl now. I was different and I got this immediately, that reaction that I wasn't supposed to have...When I saw her, she didn't look like a small girl anymore, you see. I saw her otherwise. I didn't see her as my niece, I saw this pretty woman, this beautiful woman that's standing there because she was looking like a big woman...*

By saying “when I finished I thought damn it this is happening, what am I doing...this is not an adult” immediately after sexual gratification, Felix illustrates that some perpetrators have awareness of what is inappropriate even when under the influence of alcohol. It illustrates that when they decide to engage in sexually abusive acts they do so for sexual gratification. He claimed being considerate by stopping penetration and resorting to dry sex with the child (3) when she said he was hurting her but at the same time alleged failing to invoke self-control and stop sexually abusing a young child. Felix said:

Felix: *When I had sex with her, how did I do it, I did it on her thighs.*

The data presented here has demonstrated that when it suits some men, children are given the status of adult women to justify sexual abuse. I have also shown that some of these men fantasized on sex with young children and also acted on these fantasies by transforming children into sex objects. In justifying their sexually abusive acts against young children, some of men referred to adult-sex literature to claim children invite sex. Although some of them did not use substances, some perpetrators in this study claimed that they targeted

children because their judgement was impaired. They alleged that they were in a drug induced state which made them see children as adult women. However, some of the narratives illustrate that the use of addictive substances has often been used to excuse abusive behaviour.

7.3.4 Seeing a Child as Seductive

Although children abused by perpetrators in this study were approximately six years old and younger, perpetrators asserted these children, despite their age, were 'seductive'. Perpetrators' narratives suggest that they interpreted the children's behaviour as flirtatious and concluded that children wanted sex. The narratives demonstrated that perpetrators often make claims about the powerful agency the children had in their own victimization. At the same time the narratives also illustrated that perpetrators positioned themselves as having no agency in the hands of seductive children who acted purposefully to lure adults into sexual acts. Javan reported spending time alone regularly with the children he abused. However, he claimed in his narrative that the children seduced him making him powerless to surrender. As an adult he made a choice to take advantage of the children as he stood to gain sexual gratification after alleged long periods of loneliness, as mentioned earlier, by grooming the children and then externalised blame claiming the children "caused it":

***Javan:** They said look we had a bath. I said no, you did not dry yourselves and dirt will be transferred to my bedding. They said no we want to cover ourselves. I said it's alright, cover yourselves with sheets. Use them to cover yourselves. They got into bed and covered themselves. When they started covering themselves, they started raping [playing sexualised games] each other. Oh! Are you here to play on my bed?*

***K:** Is it girls or boys?*

Javan: *Its girls aged six. Then they said to me, 'come and sleep with us'. I say 'no' I did not say I want to sleep. You are the ones who wanted to sleep. Then those children said come and have sex with us...they actually said it well and said 'come and fuck us'. I said 'oh' ...and I also ...Satan also ...God left me and ...I thought about what they say yeah and I also got into bed. So, when I went to the other one, she said 'no we start with that one', the one who was holding my bible.*

Taking the children's ages into consideration, Javan's claims of an invitation for sex by children is unlikely. However, he admitted spending a lot of time alone with these children and may have sexualised them. This point is further illustrated in Emmanuel's assertions that adults cannot escape arousal from children's 'seductive acts'. Interestingly, he blames the children by suggesting their behaviour was unacceptable but condones and justifies adult reaction to it. His narrative suggests that if children 'seduce' adults, the adult need not take responsibility and it is justifiable for an adult to want to satisfy his 'uncontrollable sexual urge':

Emmanuel: *There is no other way. They are six year olds.*

K: *Yes, they are children.*

Emmanuel: *He will be aroused, there is no way...because they are playing with their private parts, you see. He will be aroused and want to have sex with them.*

K: *He can't just leave them to play?*

Emmanuel: *No... When they do that, he will. Where did they learn all that? I am certain that he is going to do it.*

K: *What would prevent him from ignoring them and not do it?*

Emmanuel: *It's his mind.*

K: *What is his mind doing?*

Emmanuel: *His mind will change. According to him he doesn't do those things but when those children do what they are not supposed to do, he will go for them.*

K: *He can't control himself?*

Emmanuel: *No, he can't... Because they are doing what he knows and as an adult he knows himself.*

Perpetrator narratives suggest that perpetrators first groom the children and later claim the same children initiate sexual acts. Phil gave a detailed account of how he desensitized and groomed his daughters as they turned 5 to engage regularly in sexual acts with him. When they acted out what he taught them, he claimed they were interested in sex and were in control of what they should do and who they wanted to involve in sexual acts. His narrative demonstrates attempts by perpetrators to portray themselves as not the only ones in control asserting that children also have agency in sexual acts as power positions are not fixed between them and children. Phil said:

Phil: *Yeah. I don't know why but it was. Because sometimes the kid says no she wants to do that or she said no lets go and get that one, she wants to do it with them.*

K: *With the other kid?*

Phil: *Yeah, the other one.*

K: *Okay, they were also telling you how they want to do it?*

Phil: *Maybe this one will say no, the first born will say no lets get the third one, I would join them.*

K: *You just sit there?*

Phil: *Ah, they come up and ask me many times you know...Sometimes there were some nights they would come and wake me up. I was sleeping with my wife there and they would come and wake me up to play with them.*

In their narratives some perpetrators were suggesting that children as young as six are capable of using their sexuality to manipulate adults. Emmanuel's narratives suggested that he interpreted children's friendly behaviour towards the priest as 'seductive acts'. Emmanuel said:

Emmanuel: *They go to church because of that priest. They are attracted to the priest. He is attractive. You may find that those children want the priest.*

K: *Is that possible?*

Emmanuel: *Because of food.*

By externalising blame onto children, perpetrator narratives diffuse adult's accountability to excuse them for reacting to what they claim to be children's 'seductive acts'. Emmanuel said:

Emmanuel: *Children should behave.*

K: *How?*

Emmanuel: *You find that you sent the girl to another house and she is dressed in a certain way, you see.*

K: *You still remember that we are talking about small children don't you?*

Emmanuel: *Ah, small children sister, they must also dress up properly. People must exercise restraint towards children.*

This argument is illustrated further in Zeb's account:

Zeb: *It's not easy to just leave them because sometimes the way they dress, especially school children. You find that her dress is short and she decides to come and sit next to*

you. When she sits, it goes up, eish. When you look, it becomes difficult to control yourself. It's difficult to control oneself because of lust/cravings.

The data in this section shows that some perpetrators portray children as being interested in sex and having agency by initiating sexual acts. The narratives suggest they often interpret children's warmth and friendly behaviour as 'seductive'. They use such claims to portray children as powerful and then externalise blame to position themselves as powerless to children's alleged "seductive acts".

7.3.5 Seeing Child rape as a tool for revenge

Some men perceived sexual abuse of young children as the most effective form of revenge to humiliate women who they believe have wronged them. Paul's account illustrates this point:

***Paul:** Others do it as a way of punishing women. He would do it to hurt this woman and resort to doing this to her child. When I make advances she rejects me. The best thing for me to do is to spite her by having sex with her child. He becomes spiteful by having sex with her child.*

Although the intention for sexual abuse of young children could be revenge, some narratives suggest that the scorned perpetrator would not admit to this and would instead use other excuses to portray the incident as impulsive. This further illustrates the complexities of denial of responsibility in chapter 5. The intention to punish women further illustrates a sense of entitlement to sex, that a 'no' is unacceptable and that where possible violence will be used to maintain a position of dominance over women and children who resist male power and authority. Shepherd said:

***Shepherd:** I was drunk, though they really know that I did this thing intentionally with a purpose behind... behind the excuses. Sometimes neh, it might happen that eh, say for instance, it's you and me and we are having an affair, me and you, then maybe you, that affair gets to an end, then you have got a child, a baby. I start to realise that I, ok am having an affair with that lady and now she doesn't like me anymore and I'm trying maybe to convince her by promising her nice things that I really know that she likes a lot but on top of that get fruitless results you see. Then I start to realise that...I tell myself that... no, which means what I can do in order to revenge to what she did to me, I must go and rape her child. I am using that as revenge to you because we are having an affair.*

Further explanations about the use of sexual abuse of young children for revenge illustrates that some men view it as an effective form of punishment as the pain would be immeasurably devastating to the victim's mother.

Shepherd's extract illustrates this point:

***Shepherd:** To this woman...what I must do now, I must make sure that she feels the pain because if I sleep with her child, of course because she is the mother of the child, she will feel the pain.*

In this section, perpetrator narratives have illustrated the desire for revenge against women as a motivation for sexual abuse of young children. This illustrates that the hostility towards women who reject men and could not be directly challenged due to the fear of women, discussed in chapter 6, may often make children vulnerable to sexual violence.

7.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the perpetrator explanations for sexual interest in young children and identified two explanatory factors. The first one illustrated that perpetrators' personal backgrounds and life experiences were often used as explanatory factors that created a context within which sexual abuse of young children occurred. Perpetrator childhood adversities were used in making sense of sexual abuse of young children.

The second explanatory factor examined circumstances about the children which often made them vulnerable to abuse. It was evident from the perpetrator narratives that there were those who were sexually attracted to young children's physical features such as mannerisms and sexual purity. The data also illustrated that children were chosen because they were perceived as powerless sex objects by perpetrators because the risks of being caught were minimised due to the child's naiveté about sex and lack of language as well as their powerlessness. Perpetrator narratives illustrated that being a girl child meant that, when it suits some men, children could be given the status of a woman in order for abuse to take place. In such circumstances, when they were caught, some men claimed that due to being in a drug induced state, they did not realise they sexually abused a child. They then alleged that they saw a "beautiful woman" and only realised after satisfying their sexual desires that they sexually abused a young child. Although they continued to externalise blame, (Chapter 5), this chapter describes how perpetrators accused young children of 'seduction' to explain why they acted towards them in a sexually abusive way. The data presented in chapter 6 illustrated that women were perceived as untrustworthy with malicious intentions against men, positioning men as powerless thus justifying their hostility against women. The evidence in this chapter illustrated that sexual violence was deemed the most punitive tool against such women. Therefore, vengeance against women who reject men was often meted out through sexual abuse of young children as this was perceived to be the most painful form of punishment that would put women in their place.

Therefore, given the use of children as sex objects; sexual attraction to children's characteristics such as physical features, naiveté about sex, inability to report abuse, and helplessness; the idea that young children are seductive and have agency in their abuse; the idea that children are often given the status of women when it suits some men; the transfer of anger from women to young children through sexual abuse of young children for revenge, and the age, gender and carer status variables which gave triple authority to perpetrators, it is reasonable to make the following argument.

Although the evidence illustrated that sexual abuse of young children was motivated by both the need for sexual gratification and the acquisition of power, the need for power and control of women and children presented as a significant explanation for this group of perpetrators.

Gender inequality creates conditions under which sexual violence against women and children is legitimated, ideas about sexual entitlement are perpetuated condoning the use of sexual violence to dominate and control women and children for sexual gratification. Although the evidence illustrated the acquisition of power and control as the dominant motivation for sexual abuse of young children, it is important to note that not one single factor is adequate to explain sexual abuse of young children.

CHAPTER 8 – MAKING SENSE OF PERPETRATOR MOTIVES FOR SEX WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

This chapter commences by summarising the study's findings and exploring how these integrate with more general research on perpetrators. It also positions this thesis within the field of child sexual abuse in South Africa and elsewhere.

8.1 MAKING SENSE OF PERPETRATOR EXPLANATIONS

This study set out to understand how perpetrators in South Africa made sense of sexual abuse of young children. Four key themes were identified from perpetrators' narratives, as significant explanations for how perpetrators make sense of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. The following discussion addresses each of the four themes namely: the virgin cleansing myth and HIV/AIDS; denial of responsibility; sense of entitlement to sex; and sexual interest in young children. The crosscutting issues between the themes will be highlighted where relevant. In making sense of this data, perpetrator accounts are augmented with additional material from community stakeholders interviewed at the initial stages of the study as mentioned in chapter three.

8.1.1 Virgin cleansing myth and HIV/AIDS

The virgin myth was absent as an explanatory motivator in perpetrators' narratives. Although some perpetrators claimed lack of knowledge of the virgin myth, those who knew about it distanced themselves from people who believed in the myth. Perpetrators believe that such explanations are used by their accusers in an attempt to humiliate them.

Despite respondents in this study distancing themselves from the virgin myth, a literature review demonstrated how such explanations were spread in the South African society. The virgin myth appears to have been first identified in the modern South African context in 2001 by McGreal, He (McGreal, 2001) reported in the South African newspaper, the Guardian, on comments made by the then Northern Cape minister of health, Dipuo Peters about the virgin cure as a motivation for sexual abuse of young children. Subsequent to that, paediatricians Pitcher and Bowlby (2002) reported the 1% seroconversion (the change from HIV negative to HIV positive status during blood testing) rate amongst children who have been sexually abused in the 'child rape series' in Cape Town. Their report also suggested that the virgin myth could be a motivator for sexual abuse of young children. This argument drew on the 1999 study conducted by sexual health educators in Gauteng which found that 32% of the participants believed in the virgin cleansing myth (IRIN, 2002; Pitcher and Bowlby, 2002). These arguments were used by Earl-Taylor (2002) to further support the notion that the virgin cleansing myth could be the motivating factor for sexual abuse of young children. They seemed to provide explanations about why South Africa was particularly confounded by child sexual abuse, and mainly that of very young children. After all, why would post-Apartheid South Africa, with the best and most anti-oppressive legislation "unique in the world" (Richter and Dawes, 2008, p. 79) and social policy for children, become beset by this problem? Maybe something deep in the heart of Black South Africa was to blame: namely, an indigenous belief about the curative powers of virgins through sexual intercourse. The more nuanced argument held that such beliefs were once common throughout the world (Dube, 2010; Mukumbira, 2004; Smart, 2000; Lema, 1997; Meursing et al., 1995) but now, only in South Africa were such beliefs still widely held by a credulous population and considered to be plausible.

What gave credibility to this suggestion was the apparent maverick intellectuality of the former President, Thabo Mbeki concerning the cause of AIDS and how to prevent it

(Human Rights Watch, 2004). It is important to note the context within which Mbeki operated to make sense of explanations used when attempts were made to address issues related to HIV/AIDS in South Africa. According to Schneider and Fassin (2002, p. 46):

“Between the discourse and the policies of the South African state on AIDS lies a complex and sometimes contradictory set of motivations and processes, shaped in part by several years of controversy and contestation between various players over national AIDS policy, and in part by the longer history and experience of apartheid”.

In essence Mbeki disputed that HIV caused AIDS and therefore questioned whether action to prevent or destroy HIV was insufficient to fight AIDS. Officially Mbeki promoted poverty as a cause of HIV/AIDS and thus suggested anti-poverty action to address the problem (Human Rights Watch, 2004). However, any explanation of AIDS that does not attribute its causality to HIV allows in other types of cure often from ‘alternative medicine’. In the South African context this could be taken to include for example the powers of traditional healers and the virgin myth. Certainly Mbeki was not the originator of the virgin myth. Probably his reasons for backing views by AIDS dissidents (Schneider and Fassin, 2002, p. 45) lie in a belief that the AIDS epidemic was a kind of moral panic induced by racism. There is a long history of racist stereotyping of African sexuality (van der Vliet, 2001; Zwi and Bachmayer, 1990). Mbeki’s argument suggests he considered the furore over the spread of AIDS in Africa as reflecting these racist stereotypes, the alleged medical fraud by pharmaceuticals and historical use of blacks for drug experimentation (Human Rights Watch, 2004) rather than actual scientific findings.

If Mbeki thought he resisted the connection between HIV and AIDS in opposition to racist stereotypes of African sexuality then simultaneously there were those who were asserting the plausibility of certain folk beliefs in South Africa as HIV/AIDS cures. For example,

the report in *Science in Africa: Africa's first online science magazine*, by Mike Earl-Taylor, an American citizen living in South Africa, illustrates this point as follows;

"Encompassed in the current belief system of both prevention/cure of HIV/Aids is the notion that an intact hymen, and the smaller amount of vaginal secretions in young girls, prevents transmission of the disease through sexual intercourse. As previously posited, experts agree to disagree on the root causes of the shocking incidence of child rape, but all are fairly certain, that it does not meet the clinical diagnostic criteria for the paraphilia [deviant psychosexual disorder] of paedophilia." (Earl-Taylor, 2002)

The author was careful to say that other cultures had similar beliefs at various times in history – though this is not referenced or substantiated. His article also suggested a list of 22 variables which were associated in his research in sexual abuse of young children. One of these was "Offenders were members of ethnic group[s] where the pervasive myth in the so-called Virgin Cure as a prevention/cure for HIV/AIDS is relatively well entrenched within the cultural belief system" (Ibid). This is only one out of 22 alleged factors yet the article was built around this one factor which implied that certain ethnic belief systems – yet no ethnicities were specifically identified – were responsible for the harm caused by sexual abuse of young children. Thus in articles like these un-falsifiable accounts of the virgin myth were injected into a media possibly wishing to emphasise this as a pathological African belief systems that defied both common sense and scientific wisdom. The plausibility of such lines of thought was backed by Mbeki's 'dissidence'. If such a widely praised African intellectual could fail to see the causal connection between HIV and AIDS, then who among the less educated population could resist the view that traditional healers and sexual intercourse with virgins could cure AIDS?

Contemporary media accounts and also this study evidenced that many people engaged with this explanation. The following example highlights the entrenched idea of the virgin myth as the source for high rates of sexual abuse of young children:

"South Africa is in shock over a surge in the rape of children and even babies -- fuelled, activists say, by the myth that sex with a virgin will protect a man against AIDS. On Monday, 3,000 demonstrators outside the courthouse in Upington demanded the reinstatement of the death penalty for six men accused of raping a 9-month-old girl. "South Africa has reached a new low. . . it's one of many," said Kelly Hatfield, director of People Opposed to Women Abuse" (The Body, 2001).

During colonialism, racial stereotyping was used to suggest the 'Coloured' were responsible for spreading sexually transmitted diseases (Fraser, 1925). At that time Fraser suggested that the virgin myth was not the motive for the coloured to infect the children because, he argued, Blacks were not smart enough to know about the virgin cleansing myth. However, in the current democracy ethnic and racial explanations continue to be used as if child sexual abuse is only perpetrated by Black people of a specific ethnic group as mentioned by Earl-Taylor.

"The number of rapes of women and girls has increased dramatically in the past five years... Now, there has been a spate of baby rapes by black men, most of whom are HIV positive. Driving the attacks is their belief that having sex with a virgin, such a month old baby girl will cure them of AIDS...

The truth is black male relatives rape black babies.

There is something very wrong with the psyche of black South Africans that a segment of their population can stoop to such a level of depravity and perversion" (Pierce, 2003).

There is therefore continuous shifting of responsibility illustrated in the broader media literature. A recent comment by the University of Pretoria political philosophy lecturer, Dr Louise Mabille, who subsequently resigned, illustrates this point highlighting that those with powerful voices often divert the gaze by racialising the child sexual abuse problem. She stated:

"Of course it is much easier to moan endlessly about 'Calvinism' than to ask the question of why raping babies is a cultural phenomenon among black population groups" (Schutte, 2013).

Furthermore, comments by some politicians suggest the problem lies in rural areas (McGreal, 2001). BBC news online reported in December, 2001 that there are suggestions that the problem is aggravated by traditional healers who advise HIV infected men to have sex with virgins:

"The government is appealing for calm... It is also trying to dispel a widespread rumour - that having sex with a virgin cures Aids. Traditional healers, or witchdoctors, are blamed for spreading this idea and encouraging child rape" (Phillips, 2001).

The profile of the participants in this study (see the methodology chapter) demonstrates that the sexual abuse of young children had no urban/rural divide and was not simply a race issue. In this sample both White and Black men from different ethnic groups admitted to sexually abusing very young children. It is also quite clear from the narratives of these participants that the virgin cleansing myth was used to explain particular instances of sexual abuse of young children. An explanation by Delilah, a carer for HIV positive orphans who was part of a community sample mentioned in chapter 3, suggested, in her

discussion with me, that a perpetrator is motivated by the belief that sex with a virgin cures AIDS to sexually abuse children in order to cure himself. She said:

Delilah: In the past, these traditional healers used to say that if a man has this illness, and then have sex with a very young child he will be cured... in my mind I thought what this man is doing is...he is trying to cure himself using children.

The absence of a cure and difficulties in explaining why young children are sexually abused seems to have led most people, as illustrated in chapter 2, to conclude that perpetrators may have been motivated to sexually abuse young children in an attempt to access a cure for HIV/AIDS or venereal diseases. Similar explanations were given by other participants in the community sample mentioned in chapter three. Their explanations and evidence in section 4.3 show that the virgin cleansing myth was used as part of the accusation and prosecution of these perpetrators. This finding resonates with others in Malawi (Mtibo, Kennedy and Umar, 2011). Although HIV was not evident in the human population around 1913, there are similarities in the way the virgin myth was used as a possible cure for venereal diseases at that time with the current explanations used in South Africa for the cure of HIV/AIDS. The findings also illustrates that the use of explanations suggesting perpetrators use sex as an indigenous remedy for venereal diseases by the prosecutors and medical practitioners is historical and not unique to South Africa as is evident in other contexts such as Scotland in 1913 (Davidson, 2001). Davidson did not only report that the judiciary in Scotland used the virgin cleansing myth for venereal diseases as an explanation but also that the perpetrators denied and distanced themselves from any connection between the virgin myth and their behaviour providing other explanations including lust for their abusive acts. To validate their claims that the virgin myth had nothing to do with their motives for sex with young children, some of the perpetrators in this study have argued that if they were HIV positive the child would have

been infected. A similar assertion was made by one child protection police officer (CPO) interviewed during this study:

CPO1: Like when they say, if somebody is having AIDS. If he can go and sleep with a small child then he will heal you see. But when... we take the child for medical examination and so on, the family give a consent that the child must be tested... in all my cases I have never found the one who is HIV positive you see, that's why I say I just hear from outside but I don't believe that is really the reason.

The denial of the virgin myth as an explanation by perpetrators in this study resonates with findings from other research in South Africa (Kleijn, 2010, p. 288). Similarly Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle's (2011) found that none of the participants had given consideration to the virgin cleansing myth for HIV/AIDS. Participants in this study distanced themselves from the myth by stating that those who are infected with HIV/AIDS might deliberately sexually abuse children with the intention of spreading the virus to others. Similarly, two participants in Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle's (2011) study stated that if infected they would deliberately spread the virus.

It can be argued that the virgin myth is then part of a pernicious racist stereotype which has become an active part of the picture for that part of the South African community that does not perpetrate sexual abuse of young children. It explains the unthinkable. It provides logic to otherwise irrational violence. Yet widespread belief in the salience of the virgin myth is itself a myth. None of the perpetrators interviewed in this study described themselves as being motivated by the virgin cleansing myth to sexually abuse young children.

Perpetrator explanations suggested they mostly wanted to be perceived to have some level of awareness about HIV/AIDS, that it is incurable and that even a virgin would not cure it. For example, Caiphus in chapter 4 argued that those who use the virgin myth explanation *“are illiterate and they don’t know”*.

All the perpetrators interviewed for this study denied using the virgin myth and therefore it does not hold up as a plausible explanation for sexual abuse of young children for this sample.

On the one hand perpetrators in this study did not choose to use the myth, which could have relieved them of the need to provide excuses. They opted to offer possibly even more incriminating explanations for their abusive acts. These incriminating explanations also illustrated their entrenched beliefs in male domination and the right to sexual entitlement which, possibly, made them interpret their behaviour as unproblematic and justifiable. On the other hand some of the arguments they made when denying their belief in the myth illustrated the humiliation they said they felt when labelled as rapists who sexually abuse young children to cure themselves from HIV/AIDS. The stigma of being HIV positive may have contributed to the denial of a belief in the virgin cleansing myth. Therefore, participants in this study offered a variety of other explanations for their actions. These will now be discussed.

8.1.2 Denial of responsibility

Understanding how perpetrators in this study make sense of sexual abuse of young children is a complex process. Although they refuted the virgin myth as an explanation, they shifted from one explanation about their abusive actions to another. The findings demonstrate that, in explaining their motives for sexual abuse of young children, perpetrators engaged in a back and forth process of denial. They often denied responsibility

for their abusive behaviours and lacked the ability to recognise the harmful impact of their sexually abusive behaviour to young children. The findings of this study support the suggestion that denial is a complex, multifaceted construct (Schneider and Wright, 2004; Salter, 1988) and that there are varying degrees and types of denial. However, the findings did not support the suggestion by these researchers that the denial process would progress from partial justified admission to full accountability for the offence. None of the perpetrators in this study, including those who were about to be released after rehabilitation, acknowledged full admission with acceptance of responsibility. The nature of denial within this study suggests the culture of violence together with a patriarchal nature of the South African society may have contributed to a lack of admission of sexual violence as inappropriate.

Those who partially admitted shifted positions between denial and admission offering contradictory and fragmentary explanations. These findings support and extend Happel and Auffrey's (1995) work which described twelve steps in the denial process. The findings resonate with Happel and Auffrey's (1995) statement that it is rare to find sex offenders who are completely honest about their offending behaviour. However, some of the perpetrators in this sample who seemed honest about their offending behaviour talked openly about their abusive behaviour because they did not interpret it as inappropriate and were able to minimise or justify it as illustrated in chapter 5.

Perpetrator explanations illustrated that denial is both conceptual and relational. From the analysis of findings it emerged that acknowledging that a sexually inappropriate act has been committed and taking responsibility for it was more complicated than just admission or disavowing of an offence. For their denial narratives to be effective they used cultural and political explanations drawn from their everyday lives to construct dominant narratives to convince themselves and others that abuse did not happen or it was not their fault.

In their construction of denial, perpetrators often made statements that “perform a variety of nonobvious context specific functions” (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1997 cited in Webster and Beech, 2000, p. 252). For example, some participants said “they were naked” (Emmanuel) and “they caused it” (Javan). They achieved this by moving between positioning themselves as victims (Muchoki, 2011; Freund, Watson and Dickey, 1990) and assuming positions of dominance. They used statements such as 'look at what you have done now, look at what you made me do now' (Raphael) to present themselves as victims. Depending on circumstances, they positioned themselves as having agency to dominate and control with statements such as “I want to show you who is the boss...I take you” (Hebron). However, they also preferred diminishing their agency to powers beyond their control such as addictive substances, by, in some instances, saying “I lost control” or “I lost my mind”. This finding resonated with other studies such as Tolfrey, Fox and Jeffcote (2011).

In most cases, when these men portrayed themselves as victims, they explain their position in such a way to relieve themselves of the responsibilities for their abusive behaviour. Happel and Auffrey (1995, p. 6) refers to these moves as “the dance of denial” that offenders engage in to prevent or lessen “shamefulness, confusion, embarrassment, a sense of inadequacy, taking responsibility and guilt”. They suggested that in performing this dance offenders are said to move back and forth between phases of denial. Furthermore, perpetrators used tactics such as (1) “attacking the source” by blaming their victims or those who got them arrested, in most instances mothers (Hooper, 1992); (2) “reframing the issue” by altering details about their offence including ages of victims and changing positions in various facets of denial including whether or not they committed or planned the abuse; and (3) the “use of language games” by minimizing the impact of the abuse or providing justifications as well as pleading ignorance. The finding illustrating the use of

tactics resonate with other research elsewhere (Schneider and Wright, 2004). It also illustrates the entrenched denial of sexual abuse in society which is not unique to South Africa.

Understanding perpetrator denial explanations was complicated by the fact that the difference between denial and a possible lack of insight was not always clear in their explanations. The findings that some perpetrators admitted to the offence but argued that sex with children is not inappropriate resonated with other studies (Lund, 2000; Pollock and Hashmall, 1991). The findings further illustrated how these men used denial, including self-deception, as a way of averting threats to ensure self-preservation and often that of the family as well in resonance with previous research (Schneider and Wright, 2004; Lord and Wilmott, 2004).

Participants blamed young children for their victimisation suggesting that the children's behaviour was seductive or they initiated sexual acts. These findings are surprising in the South African context because young children are seen as innocent and completely blameless in instances of sexual abuse. Therefore, the findings contradict other research findings (Davies and Rogers, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2005; Back and Lips, 1998; Meursing et al., 1995) which found that sexually abused girls approaching teenage years are more likely to be held responsible for their abuse than younger victims.

Although perpetrators in this study expressly blamed young children for 'seducing them', the findings demonstrate that there was both subtle and open planning in the implementation of grooming strategies. Perpetrators used these strategies to isolate their victims from carers and to manipulate the environment to facilitate the abuse. These findings resonate with other studies (Craven et al, 2006; McAlinden, 2006; Smallbone and Wortley, 2000) which demonstrated that abuse is not always spontaneous as perpetrators

want to avoid getting caught. The use of gifts, bribes and games in the grooming process reported in this study supports other findings (McAlinden, 2006; Berliner and Elliott, 2002; Smallbone and Wortley, 2000; Elliot, Browne and Kilcoyne, 1995). Perpetrators use any means within their power to normalise sexually abusive acts and desensitize children. This finding contrasts with the only other study (Kleijn, 2010) of perpetrators of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa which did not find evidence that perpetrators groomed their victims.

When societal systems, such as the judiciary mentioned in chapter two, apparently enable sexual abuse to be supported by providing mechanisms through which perpetrators can be excused for sexual violence, conditions for the tolerance of sexual violence are reinforced. The data reported in chapters five and six resonate with Burt's (1980) argument that explanations for sexual violence perpetuate the tolerance of sexual violence. Some of the common ways in which false beliefs are reported to have been used by these men resonate with and extends prior work (Gavey, 2005) which illustrates that some men would argue that an act could only be defined as sexually violent if it involved physical force. Some perpetrators in this study denied perpetrating abuse because they allegedly did not penetrate their victims. Others argued they were not abusive because the children initiated the sexual acts. Such explanations illustrate that they did not interpret their acts during the grooming process, demonstrated in Phil's explanation in chapter 5, as abusive and as acts which prepared the children to act in this way. Furthermore, perpetrators' explanations illustrate the abuse of the position of trust and authority as adults.

The use of explanations which legitimate sexual violence through denial and minimization of sexual violence by these men could be referred to as the "building blocks of what the radical feminists called a "rape culture"" Gavey (2005, p. 37). This usage demonstrates the role of gender inequitable views, as shall be shown in the next section, in the construction

of justifications that minimize sexually abusive acts. Although some of the perpetrators acknowledged they committed an offence, none of the perpetrators in this study have fully accepted responsibility for their abusive acts. Their narratives illustrate that denying responsibility is complicated by many factors at both individual and societal levels. They show that perpetrators, like any other person, rely on justifications to make sense of accusations levelled against them including sexual abuse of young children. Therefore, the statements of denial of responsibility are context specific depending on how the perpetrator wishes to position himself and for what reason.

8.1.3 Sense of entitlement to sex

A key finding in this study is that the gender inequitable views of these men suggest the problem of sexual abuse of young children in South Africa is gender based and has its roots in the patriarchal nature of society. Perpetrator explanations illustrate they believe women are not supposed to say no to sex. This explanation emanates from a belief held by these men that men are supposed to have women who tend to their sexual desires as and when they want. Furthermore, they explained that they did not perceive the use of sexual violence as problematic when it facilitates access to sex. However, when South Africa became a democracy the installation of women rights threatened these deeply ingrained gender inequitable views. Their explanations illustrate that they believe democratisation gives women the power to deny men their sexual rights. Some of the men used these explanations as motivating factors for sexual abuse of young children. Chapter six demonstrates the use of these constructions of gender inequality, which emphasise male superiority within this particular sample. These findings corroborate those of other research in South Africa (Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle, 2012) and elsewhere (Polaschek and Gannon, 2004) which illustrate how perpetrators portrayed men to be more sophisticated and mature than women and subtly encouraged the subjugation of women. That these men demonstrated a perception that a woman is a child and that women and children are male

possessions, supports and extends research on feminist perspective (Abrahams, 2004; Okumu, 2004; Brownmiller, 1975) which highlights the importance of male domination within a patriarchal order as is the case in South Africa.

The role of socialization in cultivating and perpetuating stereotypes which uphold male dominance and female subordination is one of the important findings in this thesis. Explanations by perpetrators in this study demonstrate that some of these men were taught by their fathers and uncles to be in charge of women, who were often infantilised. Socialization within this context is presented as promoting stereotypes which legitimize sexual violence against women and children. The findings in chapter 6 demonstrate how socialization facilitates the handing down of this culture of abuse from one generation of men to the other, illuminating how these beliefs and the culture of violence that perpetuate them remain an unchallenged everyday language by both men and women (Stermac and Dafoe (2009).

The explanations which use gender inequitable views that encourage the perpetuation and tolerance of sexual violence against women and children supports similar findings in South Africa (Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999) and elsewhere (Pemberton and Wakeling, 2009; Polaschek and Gannon, 2004; Polaschek and Ward, 2002; Hanson et al, 1994). Participants in this study, who have used these inequitable views, draw on a pseudo-biological discourse which constructs male sexuality as uncontrollable suggesting that men must have sex once aroused. The use of a biological explanation suggests two issues. It plays a role in encouraging externalisation of blame in a sense that most men would not find it problematic to blame others including alleging that they were seduced by children. Once 'seduced' they develop an uncontrollable sexual urge and have to have sex with the available female. By claiming seduction, they position themselves as victims to excuse their abusive behaviour. In this way, they do not have to take responsibility for their

abusive behaviour. The pseudo-biological explanation is also used to justify sex on demand and the use of force. These findings resonate with and extend other studies (Jewkes et al., 2005) which demonstrate how gender hierarchies are used to dominate and control women and children.

The belief in biological determinism has also been used together with patriarchal beliefs that encourage male sexual entitlement. These explanations have often been presented and accepted as a 'truth' which is used to justify male promiscuity. This finding resonates with other research (Jewkes et al., 2011; Williams, 2011; Scheinkman, 2005). It illustrates how men use polygamy or multiple sexual partners to assert masculinity. Furthermore, the views by these men show that they legitimize infidelity to make circumstances favourable for them to access sex without restrictions and without emotional investment in the relationship supporting other research in South Africa (Dunkle et al., 2007) and elsewhere (Malamuth et al., 1995). Men in this study further illustrated lack of empathy by ignoring young children's reactions to pain during sexually abusive acts. This finding illustrates the use of power and is comparable to other studies (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2009) in which some of their participants talked about sexually forcing themselves onto a woman who had not given consent, or was in a drug induced state.

These gender inequitable attitudes in sexual relationships cultivate hostilities against women which would not view sexual violence as problematic. According to Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, (1996, p. 9) men often use "the circulation of certain constructions of love, intercourse and entitlement" to control women who are "expected to submit" (Wood, Maforah and Jewkes, 1996, p. 9) as they have no agency to challenge male domination under patriarchy. Perpetrator explanations demonstrate how some men manipulate women into sexual relationships which they know they would not be able to maintain. Similarly, participants reported that children are targeted because they are powerless to resist and are

easily manipulated to comply during acts of sexual abuse. The findings illustrate that the exercise of power and control in sexual violence is very complex as it involves multiple strategies including the use of socioeconomic and physical power over women and children.

Socioeconomic factors of both the perpetrator and the victim often contribute to the perpetuation of sexual violence. Men's financial positions were reported to have an impact on how women and children are treated. Money was used to entice and entrap women and groom children for sex. This finding extends work by Wojcicki (2002) which illustrates the commodification of women and children. What emerged as important is that these men did not only aspire to have money to lure girls, they also prevented women from working in order to maintain a position of authority that is economically superior.

Respondents justified the use of physical force in perpetrating sexual violence when women said no to sex. This finding resonates with other research (Jewkes et al., 2011; Rawoot, 2011; Jewkes and Morrell, 2010; Jewkes et al., 2009; Wood and Jewkes, 1998). The use of force illustrates that men believe that their superiority should not be challenged. However, the introduction of legislation that protects the rights of women and children in the democratic South Africa has been met with resistance by men who hold views that justify the use of force and gender inequality.

Men in this study perceived the legislation that promotes women's rights as disempowering to men. These findings strengthen arguments that the history of tolerance of violence, due in part to structural violence perpetrated by the apartheid government also played a role in legitimating sexual violence (Moffett, 2006; Wojcicki, 2002; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999; Shaik and Park 1998; Wood and Jewkes, 1998; Vogelmann and Lewis 1993; Simpson 1992; Campbell 1992; Mokwena 1991; Guy 1987). For example,

statements such as “...all these changed during the ANC government because Whites did not interfere in family matters... They just didn’t want murder and rape” (Javan), illustrate the lack of concern about sexual violence including child sexual abuse within the African population by the apartheid government which trivialised sexual violence. During that period child sexual abuse as a social problem within the African population, was reported to have had no place on the public agenda, becoming privatised as a family matter (Posel, 2005b). It is therefore not surprising that admission of child sexual abuse as a problem is in most cases not possible. This is mainly due to the culture of violence, an entrenched belief in patriarchy and a sense of entitlement which makes perpetrators deny that they are engaging in sexual abuse.

Some of the men in this study adhere to a culture of violence and patriarchal beliefs and professed to have used extreme forms of violence against women, mostly those who, according to these men, challenged male domination. Hebron’s narrative in chapter six illustrates this point:

“You think you are the boss, I like to show you now who the boss is... I can see whilst I am talking with her,... that is what satisfies me at that time...this woman is starting to get frightened”.

Taking into consideration these misogynistic attitudes, it is understandable that most perpetrators in this study perceive enforcement of the new legislation as “a crisis of masculinity” (Moffett, 2006; Posel, 2005a) because sexual abuse is punishable by law. It is plausible to suppose that when a society and its leaders promote patriarchy and subjugation of women, legislation alone will not be adequate to prevent abuse. This is mainly due to the privileging of male sexual entitlement which encourages tolerance for sexual violence against women and children and an environment sympathetic to rape beliefs.

The finding that most perpetrators in this study believe men are entitled to sex has illustrated that sexual violence including abuse of young children in South Africa is partly fuelled by gender inequalities (Abrahams, 2004). The debates about sexual violence highlight the complexities of this problem in South Africa and more specifically how it influences the perpetration of sexual abuse of young children. Therefore, these perpetrators' accounts of a sense of entitlement to sex suggest that their belief in the right to have sex as and when they want has led to sexual abuse of young children where adult women were not accessible

8.1.4 Sexual interest in young children

This study has demonstrated two factors which played a role in sexual interest in children. The first is that perpetrators' personal factors often create a context within which sexual abuse of young children could occur. The second is that the children's particular circumstances often made them vulnerable to abuse. The 'damaged adults' explanations predominate. This study has demonstrated how perpetrators have often used explanations that externalise blame to others and circumstances. They often implied they were damaged by childhood adversities including neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse. They suggest that childhood adversities may have led to the development of sexually abusive behaviour. These findings support and extend other work on sexual violence (Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle, 2012; Kleijn, 2010; Jewkes, 2002; Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999). One explanation of how childhood adversities may lead to offending is that when children witness domestic violence against their mothers, they learn to tolerate violence (Abrahams et al., 2006; Abrahams and Jewkes, 2005). They also become physically aggressive early in life and are likely to progress their aggression into criminal acts later in life (Jewkes et al., 2011; Kleijn, 2010). The findings in this study demonstrate that emotional distress, dysfunctional family relationships and poverty during childhood

have often been used by participants to suggest that their reported childhood adversities had an adverse impact on their childhood development. Furthermore, the explanations suggested that their childhood experiences may have taught them about sexualised acts and led to them becoming sex offenders. These findings support other work in South Africa (Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle, 2012; Kleijn, 2010; Friedrich et al., 2003). Although the majority of participants reported childhood abuse and poverty, some of the perpetrators in this sample did not. Poor socioeconomic circumstances in South Africa suggest the majority of men within this society were subjected to abuse and poverty during childhood and adulthood. However, most of these men do not sexually abuse young children.

The findings have demonstrated how poor socio-economic circumstances for both the victim and perpetrator may further create a complex context which renders children vulnerable to sexual abuse. The use of the economic power base had a role to play in a sense that perpetrators in this study reported using their economic advantage to lure women and children into abuse with money and food supporting and extending other work in this field (Jewkes, Dunkle, Koss, Levin and Nduna, Jama and Sikweyiya, 2006; Wojcicki, 2002). This finding also extends work by Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle's (2012) which found that men from low income families were less likely to offend. The findings illustrate that economic advantage was perceived by these men to be important for manhood as it ensured the maintenance of power positions. It also shows the importance of the use of power, in this case, economic power, in exercising control over women and children.

However, within this study, the findings also illustrate that being poor contributed to instability and lower self-esteem amongst perpetrators (Jewkes et al., 2013; Kleijn, 2010) rendering men less able to compete with peers who are in a position to give money to adult women in intimate relationships. Being poor also meant to some of these men that they

could not exercise control over women and could not dictate sexual terms. As a result, some of the men alleged, similar to findings in other research (Jewkes et al., 2005), that they found it difficult to maintain intimate relationships with adult women when they were economically disadvantaged. Unlike with adult women, they did not have to have an economic advantage to exercise control over young children.

Perpetrators' explanations illustrate that it was this reported feeling of powerlessness against adult women that sometimes motivated them to sexually abuse young children. These men were threatened by women's empowerment because for them it was easier to dominate and control women who are economically disadvantaged and dependent on them. In the eyes of these men dependent women are more obedient and vulnerable to abuse. This finding demonstrates how perpetrators used democracy to suggest that adult women are empowered to say no to sex and therefore inaccessible for sex as and when these men wanted it. They used these explanations to excuse the abuse of young children for sexual gratification.

Although young children also have rights that protect them from abuse, their gender, age and status in a patriarchal hierarchy makes them vulnerable to abuse because they are powerless to defend themselves and to report the abuse. Similarly, poverty may predispose children to hunger and lack of supervision by working parents making them vulnerable. Under such circumstances children became easy targets for abuse mainly because grooming may not always involve money. However when it did, some of these allegedly poor men were able to bribe these vulnerable children with very small amounts of money or sweets. It becomes easier to lure children with sweets into abuse as they are less demanding financially. Therefore, despite the rights based legislation in South Africa, explanations by perpetrators illustrate that cultural and socioeconomic factors remain unchanged. There is therefore tension between the persistence of circumstances which

perpetuate the tolerance of sexual violence and the rights based legislation. However, abusive circumstances prevail and the majority of South African children's vulnerability to abuse persists. What was significant in these findings is the presence of contradictory explanations about whether socioeconomic factors make children vulnerable to abuse. These contradictions illustrate that although poverty may exacerbate vulnerability, abuse is not determined by one's social class.

Similarly, the profiles of the participants of this study showed that although the majority of participants were from 'broken' homes, others were raised in stable two parent families. The explanations offered in this study suggest that being raised in broken and dysfunctional families led to a failed socialization process (Lussier and Healey, 2010; Ramphela, 1991) due to poor parenting and exposure to abusive behaviour, which it is suggested, left perpetrators without interpersonal skills to manage their behaviour (Abrahams, Jewkes and Laubsher, 1999) and hostile attitudes towards women (Jewkes et al., 2011).

An unexpected finding was that these perpetrators attributed their own experiences of childhood sexual abuse to their sexual attraction to young children as well as their preoccupation with sex. The oldest perpetrators (Javan and Phil) claimed to have been sexually abused early in life and the evidence suggests they started abusing children at the same age at which they reported to have been abused. This pattern illustrates how some perpetrators process their abuse as a "trigger" (Hebron) or as "a rite of passage" for sexual activities supporting findings in international research (West, 1998; Leahy, 1992). Although the findings suggest that childhood adversities played a role in socialising perpetrators into a life of violence and abuse, it does not necessarily suggest all abused children would go on to sexually abuse young children (Burn and Brown, 2006; Finkelhor, 1984). Some perpetrators in this study have also questioned that possibility themselves.

Another important finding is that four of the seven respondents who alleged experiencing childhood sexual abuse themselves reported female-perpetrated sexual abuse, a recently discovered phenomenon in South Africa. According to Deering and Mellor (2011) female perpetrated sexual abuse has severe impact on its victims. Although Sikweyiya and Jewkes (2009) highlight the distress of female perpetrated abuse reported by their community based sample, the findings for perpetrators in this study are surprising. These men claimed that because the abuse was consistent, it had prepared or socialized them to become sexually attracted to young children.

Poor relationships with female carers have also been used to explain perpetrators' hostility towards women and their adoption of violence including sexual violence. These findings support those of Jewkes et al. (2011). This idea supports the dangerous world implicit theory (Polaschek and Gannon, 2004; Ward and Keenan, 1999) as well as datasets in South Africa (Jewkes et al., 2005) which illustrate how victims of sexual violence are often blamed for the abuse. By alleging that women are untrustworthy these men positioned themselves as powerless to justify their hostility against women and children.

In the South African context changes in the constitution have not translated into changes in the patriarchal system which upholds gender inequitable practices (Richter and Dawes, 2008) adhered to by most men in this study as shown in chapter six. The continued support of the patriarchal system within South African society makes it possible for participants in this study to externalise blame unproblematically, suggesting that women's empowerment threatens masculinity. The debates about Traditional Courts Bill in South Africa highlight the contradictions this bill raises on issues about democracy. The bill states that:

“In the application of this Act, the following should be recognized and taken into account: b) the existence of systemic unfair discrimination and inequalities,

particularly in respect of gender, age, race, as well as a result of past unfair discrimination, brought about by colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy”(Tribal Authority Bill. Republic of South Africa. National Council of Provinces, 2012, p. 5). However, many issues have been left unaddressed in the bill which could compromise the reconciliatory role these courts are supposed to play. For example, traditional authorities are male dominated. Positions in traditional authorities’ official structure are not acquired by achievement but ascription. The courts’ role is to promote and preserve customary law which upholds the ideology of patriarchy which is at the root of gender inequality. It is also an unwritten expectation in some ethnic groups that people who actively participate in such structures should have attended circumcision schools to undergo the rites of passage to be regarded as a major, or an adult, to have a voice in such structures (Crowley and Kesner, 1990). One participant (Javan) had emphasized the importance of the rites of passage and the way traditional courts, which are mostly male dominated, often make rulings that favour men. Women and children are often disadvantaged and may not receive a fair hearing because they may not always be allowed to address the traditional courts as explained earlier. It remains to be seen how the Bill can promote the maintenance of women and children’s basic human rights. Another contentious issue is whether only Blacks living in tribal villages would be compelled to go through such courts, a situation which may be discriminatory.

Furthermore, some perpetrator explanations suggest that insecurities in intimate relationships emanate from lack of role models and failed socialization. They then argued that, as a result, they lacked social skills needed to initiate and maintain intimate relationships with peers, adding to their hostilities towards women. Therefore when these men wanted to satisfy their sexual desires in the absence of consenting adult women, powerless young children became targets for abuse. Other participants alleged they did not see a child but an adult woman. Under such circumstances the most vulnerable young

children were given the status of an adult woman to put them at the same level with adult women to justify seeing them as “women” and as good enough for men’s sexual gratification (Hartley, 2001; Scully and Marolla, 1985). Stating that they saw children as women, these participants’ explanations demonstrate that they did not perceive their abusive behaviour as problematic. It also illustrates a lack of differentiation between adult women and children which might explain why young children are used as sexual objects to satisfy male desire.

Although perpetrators claimed they were motivated by sexual desire, they used their age and gender to equip themselves with double authority (Meursing et al., 1995) over the children they abused. Similarly, explanations offered by participants in this study, in chapter seven, suggest there is often a displacement of anger by perpetrators from women to young children through child sexual abuse, which is aimed at punishing mothers and others. The displacement highlights the desire for power and a struggle for the maintenance of male authority. Power seeking through sexual violence in a very conscious way was a minority position amongst perpetrators in this study. However, this finding suggests that sex, affection and intimacy may have not always been the motive for sexual abuse of young children. It confirms and extends feminist perspective in South Africa (Jewkes et al, 2011; Kleijn, 2010) and elsewhere (Gavey, 2005; Seymour, 1998; Hanson, Gizzarelli and Scott, 1994; Brownmiller, 1975) that some perpetrators use sexual abuse to instil fear in women and children and to punish them. It highlights the power motive and the gendered nature of sexual abuse in South Africa.

These findings coupled with the sense of entitlement to sex illustrate the role of gender socialization in legitimizing sexual violence against women and children portraying them as objects of men’s pleasure (Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle, 2012; WHO, 2010). The objectification of women and children illustrate that children are chosen because they are

perceived as powerless sex objects. Such notions strengthen the argument that gender inequality creates an environment in which male domination prevails. Within this environment acceptance and tolerance of a sense of entitlement to sex for men and the use of sexual violence against women and children (Jewkes, Nduna, Shai and Dunkle, 2012) is encouraged. These conditions are tolerated to satisfy some men's "uncontrollable sexual desires" as and when they occur.

Another important finding was the perpetrator's sexual interest in children. These men presented profiles which portrayed them as powerless both during their childhood and later in life when they allegedly experienced difficulties in intimate relationships with adult women. They used these explanations to suggest the alleged inadequacies in intimate relationships have led to the displacement of their desires to children. The majority of those who admitted abusing children reported being motivated by the desire for sexual gratification and intimacy which was inaccessible from adult women. By taking advantage of young children's naiveté about sex and inability to report abuse (Davies and Rogers, 2009), they avoided punishment because they claimed knowing that adult women would resist their advances and report them to the police. The findings resonate with other work in South Africa (Jewkes, Sikweyiya, Morrell and Dunkle, 2011; Jewkes, Penn-Kekana, and Rose-Junius, 2005) and elsewhere (Burn and Brown, 2006) which identifies the perpetrator's motive to attain a position of power rather than attributing the motive for the abuse as sexual. At the same time, by taking advantage of young children, they abused their positions as adults/carers for their sexual gratification.

Taking into consideration the patriarchal nature of society as well as the political history of violence and oppression against the majority of citizens in South Africa (Shefer, 2010; Posel, 2005b; Jackson, 2000; Bornman et al., 1998) it is "plausible to suppose that when a society tolerates sexual harassment of women this contributes to a rape-supportive

environment” (Bryden and Grier, 2011, p. 245) which affects young children as illustrated by findings in this study.

It could be argued that although not all sexually abused children will themselves sexually abuse young children later in life, some of them will (Bromberg and Johnson, 2001). Sexually abusive behaviour is complex and cannot be predetermined using past experiences. The evidence in this thesis highlights a pervasive desire by most men to regain or protect their masculinity. It also highlights that sex with young children is viewed as an effective instrument to punish women who challenge masculine authority. The empowerment of women in an environment that legitimizes gender inequality and sexual entitlement for men renders children more vulnerable if the legislative framework is not used to adequately protect them. What the findings mean for the study is that perpetrators were motivated to abuse young children by a variety of circumstances. Although some of the circumstances seemed similar, their abusive acts were different. This illustrates complexities in perpetrator sense making about sexual abuse of young children.

8.2 CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined a number of issues that impact on the construction of sexual violence and more specifically sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. It has illustrated tensions inherent in the cultural and political system which upholds patriarchal practices preventing the realisation of gender equality partly due to the lack of political will to promote the rights based legislation that would, if implemented, play a meaningful role in addressing gender inequalities and sexual violence.

The existing tensions between traditional laws and the South African constitution illustrate a continued denial of the gendered nature of sexual violence. This denial creates a barrier for meaningful debates on issues of sexual violence against women and children which

could bring about changes in policies, practices and the overall situation with the sexual violence agenda in South Africa. Instead of focusing on the racialisation of child sexual abuse, the transitional period should be viewed as an opportunity to move away from western solutions focusing on debates that explore indigenous explanations and interventions to child sexual abuse that respond to sociocultural circumstances in the country. The next chapter explores further contributions, limitations and implications.

CHAPTER 9 – CONCLUSION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Drawing on findings from the previous chapters, this chapter summarises the findings and explains how this study contributes to knowledge about perpetrator explanations for sexual abuse of young children. I will explore the main caveats of the study and suggest some implications for policy and practice. I will conclude with brief methodological reflections and suggestions for further research.

9.2 CLAIMS TO CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This study is one of the first studies to research perpetrator explanations for sexual abuse of very young children in South Africa. It is also one of the first in-depth sociological studies in South Africa which researched perpetrators of young children taking a life history approach and drew mainly on their explanations about sexual abuse of young children based on their experiences, values and beliefs. This sociological study elicited perpetrator explanations that illustrate the role of the socio-cultural environment and language in transmitting messages that reinforce patriarchal practices which promote gender inequalities. Therefore, the findings in this study contribute to the international debates on perpetrator explanation for sexual abuse of young children.

The findings have demonstrated that perpetrators did not construct child sexual abuse in a way that might have been predicted from other studies. Based on information from the international literature as well as explanations published in both paper and electronic media in South Africa, there was an expectation that the virgin cleansing myth would feature frequently in perpetrator explanations about their motives for sexual abuse of young

children. The findings have illustrated that this was not the case. Perpetrator explanations differed from what might have been expected.

Instead of using the myth as an explanation, perpetrators came up with a very complex range of explanations highlighting common themes. These themes imply that the social construction of manhood within the South African society often emphasises masculinity in a way that encourages male domination of women and children and tolerance of sexual violence towards them. Therefore, it was not problematic for most of these men to deny responsibility for their abusive behaviour and externalise blame to others.

This study found that most of these men reported experiences of being disempowered as men and attributed their disempowerment to democratisation. They also reported being disempowered to access sex through conventional means, and this emerged as an explanatory factor for heightened risk to sexual offending towards young children within South Africa. Within the South African context, this study contributes in raising awareness of the impact of democratisation, in a patriarchal society, on masculinity. It also contributes to debates which argue that sexual violence is often gender based and that this affects even the youngest members of society.

In South Africa, the gendered nature of the problem of child sexual abuse as explained by perpetrators, contributes to debates about why perpetrators develop sexual interest in young children. It illustrates that complex factors, such as the need for power and sexual gratification, have a role to play in sexual abuse of young children. It highlights tensions that exist between efforts to uphold women and children's rights in a democracy and the deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs and practices in the South African society.

9.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR POLICY, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Challenging deeply ingrained patriarchal practices that perpetuate attitudes of sexual entitlement in this society requires multifaceted and complex societal processes. In order to bring about meaningful change it is important to highlight the role played by gender inequitable views that legitimise and encourage the tolerance of explanations which perpetuate sexual violence. It is important to address the way boys are socialised into manhood as one of the factors which contribute to attitudes supportive of sexual violence. Most participants in this study reported being raised without fathers and consequently without learning about manhood and how to treat a woman. Explanations offered by these men about how they were socialised illustrate the importance of questioning why manhood is overemphasized whereas fatherhood/parenting is not in key debates about child sexual abuse. The findings highlight the implications for the role of child rearing in addressing and preventing child sexual abuse as a social problem.

The explanations used by perpetrators in making sense of sexual abuse of young children call for a society wide debate which requires the involvement of all sectors of society. Although it is important for these debates to be incorporated in the life skills syllabus by the department of basic education, society wide debates for all ages are essential. Furthermore, the perpetrator explanations also have implications for the Moral Regeneration Movement initiative launched by the then Deputy President Jacob Zuma in 2002 (Rauch, 2005) aimed at addressing the ills of society including sexual violence.

The findings in this study suggest that others, not perpetrators, used the virgin myth to make sense of sexual abuse of young children. There appears to be a lack of openness to sex talk and no acknowledgement of the importance of open debates across sectors about child sexual abuse and beliefs that perpetuate sexual violence. The findings call for a

review by the Department of Justice on whether South Africa's new democracy would benefit from the Tribal Authority Bill. Although the government presents the bill as a way of promoting cultural practices, it runs the risk of compromising gender equality, access to fair justice and human rights as enshrined in the South African constitution for rural people in tribal areas. This is mainly due to its adherence to colonial oppressive mechanisms which position traditional leaders, who are predominantly male, as heads of tribal courts. The courts run the risk of being characterised by male control and bias against women.

Most participants saw the democratisation of South Africa as problematic because it changed the status of women and created an empowering environment which they perceived as stripping them of their masculinity. Any empowerment programme aimed at addressing gender issues cannot succeed without the involvement of both genders at all levels. The findings have implications for how the Commission on Gender Equality and related organisations design and implement programmes aimed at promoting gender equality in South Africa in a way that takes into consideration men's fears about their changing status in a democracy within both the public and private spaces.

This study illustrated some complexities of child sexual abuse as a social problem and that the social construction of masculinity which emphasises male superiority and women as subservient contributes in the perpetration of sexual violence. However, due to reliance on western literature and treatment programmes designed using western knowledge, rehabilitation programmes often rely on medical treatment models. The findings illustrate the importance of understanding and incorporating perpetrator beliefs and values, as articulated in an African context, within the current rehabilitation programmes.

Most participants reported experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage and lack of adequate access to education during childhood. The implications are that rehabilitation programmes

for sex offenders should be sufficiently robust to emphasize life skills orientation which prepares offenders for economic independence when they are released. The programmes should have an extensive after-care programme to ease reintegration into society.

Information on incidence and prevalence provided by gatekeepers during negotiations for access at the beginning of this study illustrated that records are incomplete and not shared between key departments involved in child protection such as health, police and social development. The findings have implications for how the current policies for interdepartmental collaboration as well as cooperative governance could be effectively implemented.

South Africa has been commended for having one of the best rights based legislation in the world. However, the high rates of poverty, crime, and sexual violence illustrate the poor implementation of these policies in practice. One implication of this study calls for the police force to be more responsive to reports of sexual violence, ensuring collection of evidence immediately after offences are reported; and protection of victims and witnesses from possible retribution from suspects and their families.

Similarly, the high rates of poverty and increasing numbers of AIDS orphans imply that the welfare of many children is not secured. The children's need for food and money makes them vulnerable to grooming for abuse as illustrated in this study. The implications are that provision for alternative care options for these children are required. The protection of victims of abuse and provision of care options for children in need raises challenges due to a shortage of care facilities. It becomes crucial for the department of Social Development to redirect resources in addressing child care challenges.

This study uncovered the inadequacy of the records held by the Department of Correctional Services in identifying the number of sex offenders for children aged less than six years. There are serious issues arising from incomplete police records. This has implications for how child sexual abuse information is managed including how different ages of both victims and perpetrators are categorised to aid policy development, service delivery and research.

9.4 MAJOR CAVEATS TO THE STUDY

The study focused on three of the nine Provinces of South Africa. Although participants originated from various provinces and from both rural and urban areas, one cannot assume that explanations provided in other parts of the country would be similar. Furthermore, the sample consisted of Black and White men and no other ethnicities. Although the views held by these men may not be shared by perpetrators in the excluded ethnicities and language groups, perpetrators in this study were a selection from a wider, diverse population of ethnicities and languages. Therefore, this type of study could be replicated with other ethnicities and language groups to identify similarities and differences, continuities and inconsistencies.

The study drew on an existing group of perpetrators, in this case, incarcerated perpetrators. Therefore, the results should be treated with caution in terms of the extent to which they could be used to make a comparison with perpetrators in the community. Perpetrators' explanations of their own deeds may have been rehearsed as the experience of trials and presenting sentence mitigation evidence and giving statements to social workers, as well as rehabilitation groups (if available) may serve to 'polish' the account of what happened and render it acceptable and more blame deflecting. However, this study did not seek to determine the truth or falsity of perpetrators' explanations of/for their acts. Rather, the

study sought to find similarities and differences within the narratives provided by perpetrators between the explanations of particular events they narrated and also of their personal reflections on sexual abuse of young children as a social phenomenon in South Africa. In this respect, the consistency and structure of perpetrators' distortions are 'reliably unreliable'. It is the 'structure' that emerges from this data that is reliable as opposed to their individual 'myths' of their own lives.

9.5 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

Gaining entry into research sites was challenging for various reasons. Correctional centres have a responsibility to maintain security in these facilities. Researching human life has risks and for this reason ethical procedures are put into place to protect research participants. As a result, there were obstacles, for a variety of reasons mentioned in chapter three, in conducting research in this less explored field. However, despite the challenges the study was conducted successfully.

The success of the study is attributed to the choice of methodology. The main benefit for the use of grounded theory informed approach in this study was that it has a set of guidelines rather than rules which allowed some flexibility in undertaking the study. The knowledge that it was unproblematic to change the research direction, including the sample, when a need to explore emerging concepts presented itself encouraged theoretical sensitivity. As a result, the methodology has allowed the study to produce diverse, high-quality explanations about sexual abuse of young children that will be useful to children, families, perpetrators, professionals, policy makers and the research community.

During the construction of meaning with multilingual participants in interviews, an understanding of different languages spoken in South Africa was crucial (Dwyer and

Buckle, 2009; Nayan, 1993). Being a South African and having knowledge of many South African official languages had an advantage of placing me as an “insider” without the need for an interpreter (Witcher, 2010; Serrant-Green, 2002; Meleis, 1996). My knowledge about the area and socio-cultural factors that impinge on both the rural and urban livelihoods of participants proved extremely helpful. It put me in a position to be aware of how taken-for-granted knowledge was often used as part of making justification for sexual violence (Kerstetter, 2012; Banks, 1998).

However, it also presented a challenge because participants often expected me to understand what they meant (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Merton, 1972). I had to be conscious of this fact and probe to ensure that they provided clarification on what they perceived as taken for granted knowledge (Glaser, 1978).

Similarly, being accepted by social work colleagues was also problematic as it positioned me as an insider. The challenge of being “an insider” in the eyes of professionals meant I was often left unsupervised and felt vulnerable during interviews with participants in prisons. On the other hand, being “an insider” to participants meant I was expected to help resolve issues they raised during the interviews.

The various tenets of grounded theory have opposing views about whether it is useful to have knowledge about the field prior to research or not. I took the stance of viewing grounded theory informed approach as a methodological spiral (Mills et al., 2006) and used grounded theory informed approach with some flexibility as a guide to address the research question. Although I had knowledge about language and the area, my insider position was still limited. I did not know about perpetrator motives within South Africa (Kerstetter, 2012; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; Serrant-Green, 2002).

Other variants of grounded theory argue that it is not possible to go to the field untainted by previous knowledge and literature review. Classic grounded theory requires that literature should be reviewed at the end of data collection and analysis. Although literature was reviewed prior to fieldwork, it did not cover most of the concepts which emerged during interviews. It was useful to review most of the literature after fieldwork. Doing so at this stage served to facilitate the interrogation of data during analysis. The literature review became more focused as it only addressed themes identified in the data. Doing a literature review at this stage made it possible to suspend, to a limited extent, prior knowledge and assumptions during fieldwork enabling sensitivity to emerging concepts and categories and being responsive by following leads.

Being a South African, being black, being a middle aged woman, being a social worker and being an international student all influenced different aspects of the research. Most importantly, it in a way determined what information was shared by the men I interviewed depending on their age, level of education, race and ethnicity. Although some of the participants presented as 'guarded' at the beginning of the interviews, they often became relaxed later in the process. One older participant made attempts to explore possibilities of dating me. A younger participant found it difficult to express himself for fear of using vulgar words. In terms of comments on gender inequalities, participants did not seem to perceive their explanations to me as problematic. It could be because these are commonly held views by most of the South African men and women who accept and tolerate gender inequality.

9.6 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Sexual abuse of young children is an under researched area in South Africa. This study has unearthed a lot of unanswered questions about this phenomenon suggesting future research in a number of areas:

Men in this study said that their upbringing did not adequately prepare them for manhood and that they often found themselves struggling to initiate and maintain intimate relationships with women. There is a need to explore the various ways in which men are socialised into manhood and how these may impact on their perceptions about sexual violence.

Most participants in this study voiced strongly held beliefs about male superiority in line with patriarchal ideology. The narratives suggest resistance to changes implemented during the democratisation processes in South Africa. Understanding men's perceptions of patriarchy in a democratic era and related fears may benefit debates about gender equality which is important in addressing sexual violence.

Most participants reported being undermined by women who are empowered by the rights based legislation suggesting that rights are good but women abuse them by saying no to sex. This study did not explore women's views about patriarchy and democracy. A study examining women's perceptions of patriarchy in a democratic era would also benefit debates about gender equality. Furthermore, debates on gender equality require that further research on women's views about sexual entitlement is conducted.

There is currently easy access to electronic media and informal debates by bloggers about media reports. I noted bloggers' comments on child sexual abuse news items. These comments often follow a particular pattern highlighting violent views some bloggers hold

about sex with young children. Taking into consideration that these views are written without reservation, there is a potential for researching bloggers reactions to child sexual abuse news. A study of this nature would access useful public views to extend findings in this study.

This qualitative study used grounded theory informed approach and semi structured interviews, focusing on explanations of incarcerated perpetrators. The use of grounded theory informed approach successfully facilitated exploration of perpetrator explanations about sexual abuse of young children in South Africa. The replication of the study using grounded theory informed approach is encouraged to broaden understanding of the phenomenon and compare the findings. Additional research on sexual abuse of young children using more diverse samples, such as sex offenders who abused adult women and community based offenders, and both qualitative and quantitative methodologies is encouraged.

The literature illustrates that this phenomenon is under researched elsewhere in Africa. Attempts to address this phenomenon have often relied on imposition of western explanations and solutions which are not always appropriate. There is therefore a need to understand child sexual abuse as it plays out in Africa, informed by African participants and knowledge produced by academics with an in-depth knowledge and experiential knowledge of the context in which this takes place. A similar study in other parts of Africa would contribute to debates about child sexual abuse and gender equality in the African continent.

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APPENDIX 1



from broken innocence to a healthy future



An examination of community discourses about child sexual abuse on preschool children in Limpopo – South Africa.

About the study

You are invited to take part in the study about child sexual abuse on preschool children in Limpopo. The aim of the study is to understand how perpetrators of child sexual abuse, carers of victims of sexual abuse and the community make sense of sexual abuse on preschool children; to explore how the community responds to these incidents; and to discover explanatory factors to facilitate understanding of child sexual abuse of preschool children.

Your contribution will be very useful in providing explanations about child sexual abuse on preschool children.

What kind of questions will you be asked?

Personal data including age, ethnic group, mother tongue and other languages you use, economic status, marital status and historical background will be asked.

Excerpts of stories about child sexual abuse will be presented to you and you will be asked to talk about your views in relation to the excerpt and to add any information you may deem appropriate in relation to the topic. Further questions may be asked in relation to what you or other participants have disclosed.

What will happen during the interview?

During the interview, you may be joined by a trained interpreter, to avoid breach of confidentiality, only if the researcher does not understand the language you speak. You will be asked in advance if this arrangement suits your needs. The interview may take a maximum of three hours. The researcher may take notes and record the interview with

your permission. The interview will be transcribed by the researcher, unless she does not understand the language used. In that case, transcription services will be utilized.

How will the information be stored?

All the information you provide will be stored in a secure location under lock and key whilst in South Africa and in the United Kingdom, it will be stored at the Open University in Milton Keynes. The information you provide will be kept confidential and no names will be attached to interview records to ensure anonymity. Personal details will be separately and securely stored.

How will the information be used?

The information will be used as part of the PhD research project and analysis based on this information may be published in journals and books. At the end of the study, the summarised results of the study will be made available to anyone who wishes to have a copy.

What if I decided I do not want to take part?

It must be emphasized that your participation remains voluntary at all times. You may stop the interview at anytime, and at the end of the session, you may indicate if you no longer wish to be part of the study. At that point, if you so wish, your details and information you provided will be destroyed and not included in the research report. However, your inputs are valued in this study and it is hoped that you will be happy to share your views and experiences of child sexual abuse on preschool children.

This study is co-funded by The Open University, UK and The Infant Trust and has been reviewed by The Open University Ethics Committee.

If you wish to discuss the study in more detail or have any other questions

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from broken innocence to a healthy future

***An examination of community discourses about
child sexual abuse on preschool children in
Limpopo-South Africa.***

Consent Form

This is to confirm that

I have had the details of the study explained to me.

I understand that all the information gathered will be held in strict confidence.

I am aware that I may withdraw from the study at any stage before the information I have given has been analysed. My identity will not be revealed to anyone other than the principal researcher in any reports, presentation or published material without my prior permission. Should the need for an interpreter/translator arise, such services will be used with my permission and only a professional interpreter/translator bound by professional code of ethics governing his/her conduct will be employed. I further understand that the researcher may be obligated to break confidentiality in case of criminal disclosures that have not been investigated.

I understand that the information I provide may be used for publication, and that my name will not appear in any reports or publications.

In case of difficulties, concerns or any other questions about the study, I can contact the researcher, Kgauhelo Lekalakala at +27 82 717 5099.

If I need to talk to someone else about the project I can contact (name of service provider/gatekeeper) at

Signed (participant)..... Date.....

Signed (researcher)..... Date.....

APPENDIX 3

List of participants

Participants' category	Number of participants
Government/Private sector – Gate keepers	Corrections-19 Police-6 Social Development-20 Justice-10 Non-profit sector-2
Practitioners	8
Local community members (focus groups)	3 focus groups and one community member.
Carers of young victims of sexual abuse	4
Perpetrators of sexual abuse on young children – key participants	27

APPENDIX 4

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWS (Perpetrators)

Research topic: An examination of perpetrator explanations for sexual abuse of young children in South Africa.

Researcher: Kgauhelo Lekalakala, PhD Student, The Open University.

Introduction

Brief introduction of researcher; explanation of purpose of study; choice of respondent; areas to be covered during the interview; explanation of the value of the information for the study; and expected length of the interview and confirmation of availability of respondent.

Transition

This phase will help reduce interview tension and contribute in the establishment of a rapport. It covers:

General Demographic information

Respondent's name, present address, age, marital status, year of marriage, birthplace, religion, ethnicity, educational background; socio-economic status; family life and upbringing; relationship with females in the family and relationship with women in general.

Opening question: I really want to find out what your thoughts about sexual acts with children are without trying to put it into any framework. I do have some questions I'll need answers to and I will be interjecting, using them now and then where necessary. Feel free to float a little with your answers.

1. What is the extent of child sexual abuse/sex with preschool children in Limpopo?

What are your thoughts about sexual acts with preschool children?

Tell me what the word 'child sexual abuse' means to you? (This will be left out until it emerges).

When was the first time you heard/encountered information about sexual acts with children?

What is the extent (degree/size) of incidents of sexual acts with children in your area?
In your opinion, how do these incidents end up being known to the community?

How do professionals get to know about such incidents?

What factors contribute to reporting or non-reporting of sexual acts with children?

2(a). How do you think perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with preschool children?

2(b). How do you think victims' carers make sense of sexual acts with preschool children?

Generally, what leads to sexual acts with preschool children?

Tell me about your thoughts and feelings when you learned about the incidents.

Who was involved, how were they involved and when was that?

In terms of current practices (historical, political and cultural), how do they influence the occurrence of sexual acts with preschool children?

3(a). How do you think the community makes sense of sexual acts with preschool children?

How does the community respond to sexual acts with preschool children?

What are the reasons for such reactions?

How is sex with children affecting your community?

According to you, how should the community perceive sexual acts with preschool children?

Give reasons for your answer.

3(b). How do you think the professionals make sense of sexual acts with preschool children?

What is your opinion about agency (public or private) involvement in incidents of sexual acts with children?

What is your reflection about the impact of agency response to incidents of sexual acts with children?

How do you think they should or should not respond?

4. What factors contribute to non-abusive conditions for children?

In areas where there is less or no sex with children, what do you think are the contributing factors?

Tell me more about the contributing factors and how you think they influence the existence or non-existence of sexual acts with preschool children.

How can these conditions be enhanced to protect children from sexual abuse?

Closing Questions

Summary of the interview.

Is there anything that you might not have thought about before which crossed your mind during the interview?

Is there anything else you think I should know to understand issues about sex with children better?

Is there anything you would like to tell me?

Is there anything you would like to ask me?

I should have all the information I need. In case I need clarification on what we discussed after reviewing the interview transcript, is it all right to contact you?

Closure (thank respondent for willingness to participate, information provided and time).

Check theories – cultural, learning, psychological, poverty/finance, patriarchy, HIV, etc

APPENDIX 5

CHECKLIST FOR INTERVIEWS (professionals and community)

Research topic: An examination of community discourses on sexual abuse of preschool children in Limpopo – South Africa.

Researcher: Kgauhelo Lekalakala, PhD Student, The Open University.

Introduction

Brief introduction of researcher; explanation of purpose of study; choice of respondents; areas to be covered during the interview; explanation about the value of the information for the study; and expected length of the interview and confirmation of availability of respondent.

Transition

General Demographic information

Respondent's name, present address, age, marital status, year of marriage, birthplace, religion, ethnicity, educational background and socio-economic status.

1. Opening question: I really want to find out **your thoughts or reflections about sex with children** without trying to put it into any framework.

2. What is the extent of child sexual abuse of preschool children in Limpopo?

Initial questions

Tell me what the word 'child sexual abuse' means to you?

What is your knowledge/experience of sex with children?

When was the first time you heard/encountered information about sex with children?

Intermediate questions

What is the extent (degree/size) of incidents of sex with preschool children in Limpopo/your area?

What are the contributory factors to the emergence of sex with preschool children?

How often are incidents of sex with children reported to your department/committee/authority? (Allegations, numbers of prisoners, reported cases, convictions, abandoned?)

Tell me about how professionals knew about the incident(s)?

What factors contribute to reporting or non-reporting of sex with children?

Others say families do not report incidents of child sexual abuse because they perceive it as a family matter. What do you think?

Ending questions

Under which circumstances did you hear about incidents of sex with children?

What would you say were the reasons for sex with children to happen in this particular incident?

Generally, what leads to sex with preschool children?

3. How do you (a care professional) think perpetrators make sense of sexual acts with children?

4. How do you (a care professional) think victims' carers make sense of sexual acts with children?

Tell me about your thoughts when you learned about the incidents.

Who was involved, how were they involved and when was that?

In terms of current practices (historical, political and cultural), how do they influence the occurrence of sex with children?

5. How do you (a care professional) think the community positions itself in relation to child sexual abuse?

How does the community respond to sex with children?

What are the reasons for such reactions?

How is sex with children affecting you/community?

6. How do responsible agencies position themselves in relation to child sexual abuse?

How well does your department/organisation address issues related to sex with children?

Do you think that you are doing a good job in relation to working with child sexual abuse?

Do you think that the perpetrators/carers of children who have been sexually abused think you are doing a good job?

What do you think they would want you to be doing about child sexual abuse?

Do you think other agencies think you are doing a good job working with child sexual abuse?

What could be done differently?

7. What factors contribute to non-abusive conditions for children?

In areas where there is less or no sex with children, what do you think are the contributing factors?

Tell me more about the contributing factors and how you think they influence existence or non-existence of the issue.

How can these conditions be enhanced to protect children from sexual abuse?

APPENDIX 6

VIGNETTES

Vignette 1 Stage 1

A mother to a 3months old baby girl is working as she is the breadwinner in her family. Her husband is at home and he takes care of the baby during the day. He takes the child to the crèche and collects her in the afternoon because his wife comes home late.

Vignette 1 Stage 2

One Friday when mother returned home, the baby was not home and father said he did not know who would have kept the baby because he went to look for a job in town and was delayed to get to the crèche.

Vignette 1 Stage 3

The crèche minder who lives nearby said she did not know of an arrangement to hand over the baby to someone else except the parents. She also said the person who would know who took the baby went away for the weekend and she doesn't have a phone.

Vignette 1 Stage 4

The search for the baby started. She was found under the comforter, in a pool of blood with her legs open. She was dead.

Vignette 2 Stage 1

An HIV positive father lives with his wife and daughters aged 3, 6, 8 and 12. He went to a tavern and he, together with his male friends, talked about how sex with a virgin makes a person HIV negative.

Vignette 2 Stage 2

His 12yr old daughter is perceived by relatives as an uncontrollable child because she runs away from home repeatedly. Mother is upset by this behaviour because it is causing a rift between her and her husband

Vignette 2 Stage 3

The 3 and 6 year old look tired and do not play around as expected. They look much smaller for their age and nurses are concerned about their health.

Vignette 2 Stage 4

Tests are done and the results reveal all the children are HIV positive.

Vignette 3 Stage 1

Mother who lives with her younger brother is talking to her friend about how she enjoys giving a bath to her own 3yr old daughter. She tells her friend that her daughter said she must not touch her vagina.

Vignette 3 Stage 2

Mother asked why not and the child said it hurts.

Vignette 3 Stage 3

She tells her friend she will teach the girl how to give herself a bath to avoid hurting her.

Vignette 3 Stage 4

Yesterday whilst bathing the child, she saw blood on the child's panty.

Vignette 4 Stage 1

Two six year old children see a local priest passing by and ask for 50 cents to buy fat cakes and he gives it to them.

Vignette 4 Stage 2

The next day they go to his church and tell him they are hungry. He looked for food in the kitchen and fed them.

Vignette 4 Stage 3

After eating they felt sleepy and asked to use his bed and he let them. They undressed and started touching each other's genitals, giggling and simulating sexual intercourse.

Vignette 4 Stage 4

They invited him to join them and he did.

Vignettes questions

What do you think about this situation?

What is the likelihood of the occurrence of such an incident?

How would you explain this behaviour?

Do you think that there is anything here that would raise your suspicions?

Would this behaviour concern you? Explain.

If you saw this happening what would you do?

Does this happen in your community?

To what extent?

What circumstances would encourage such behaviour?

What should be done next?

Who should do it?

If the same situation existed and the child was not involved in a sexual activity, what would the reason be?

APPENDIX 7

*The Director
Research Committee
Department of Correctional Services
Private Bag X 136
Pretoria
0001*



*P O Box 155
Polokwane
0700
E.K.Lekalakala@open.ac.uk
00447887705608 – UK
082 717 5099 - SA
9th December 2008*

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR ACCESS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR DEPARTMENT

I am a PhD student at the Open University and as part of the requirements for my studies I will do research on child sexual abuse on preschool children. I have chosen to do my research in Limpopo and to include incarcerated child sexual abuse perpetrators as research participants. I therefore request for permission to conduct research with the assistance of your department. My expectation for the research project is to access relevant information from your

You may contact me at the above contact details for more information regarding this application.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

Kgauhelo Lekalakala

Research Student

APPENDIX 8

*The Director
The Research Committee
Department of Social Development
Private Bag X 9302
Polokwane
0700*



The Open University

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Polokwane
0700
E.K.Lekalakala@open.ac.uk
00447887705608 – UK
082 717 5099 - SA
9th December 2008*

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: APPLICATION FOR ACCESS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH THROUGH YOUR DEPARTMENT

*I am a PhD student at the Open University and as part of the requirements for my studies I will do research on child sexual abuse on preschool children. I have chosen to do my research in Limpopo and to include carers of sexually abused
I sexual abuse perpetrators on probation and members
uctures as participants for the study. I therefore request
for permission to conduct research with the assistance of your department. My expectation for the research project is to access relevant information from your department, interview officials involved with carers, perpetrators on probation, community stakeholders and to get permission and support in accessing the abovementioned service users as participants for the study.*

Find attached a letter of approval from the Open University Ethics Committee and a proposal which provides details of the study for your attention.

You may contact me at the above contact details for more information on this application.

Thank you for your co-operation

Yours Sincerely

*Kgauhelo Lekalakala
Research Student*

*Faculty of Health and Social Care, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton
Keynes, MK7 6 AA, UK*

The Open University

APPENDIX 9

The Director
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19th March 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION OF ACCESS TO CORRECTIONAL CENTRES OUTSIDE LIMPOPO PROVINCE

(RESEARCH TOPIC: AN EXAMINATION OF COMMUNITY DISCOURSES ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN LIMPOPO)

Thank you for the approval for access to conduct research at Correctional Centres in Limpopo. All the officials responsible for enabling access have been very helpful and contributed extensively during data collection.

My target respondents in correctional centres are mainly inmates who committed sexual offences against children less than six years. However, due to the nature of my study and the target sample, I managed to get four inmates incarcerated for sexual offences against children aged six and below. I was able to get rich data from these participants but feel that getting more participants would enrich what I already have and provide diversified perspectives on how perpetrators make sense of sex with children below six.

I was informed that some inmates from Limpopo are transferred to other Correctional Centres out Limpopo Province but it was not possible for me to get their names. We discussed the matter with my supervision team and came to a decision that an effort should be made to increase the sample. It was agreed that since it is hoped that the study outcomes would not only make meaningful contribution to issues related to child sexual abuse in Limpopo but to the whole of South Africa, it would be acceptable for me to include inmates from other areas as well.

I am therefore requesting access to other Correctional Centres, mainly in Gauteng and North West with the hope that there could be more potential participants within this category in those Centres. You may contact me at the above-mentioned contact details for more information regarding this application.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

*Kgauhelo Lekalakala
Research Student*